ASCENSION PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Excellence. Ascending Together.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Dr. Edith M. Walker, Superintendent
Prepared by the Human Resources Department
Revised October 1, 2026

Contents

4 Employment of Personnel
4 Criminal History of Applicants
4 Personnel Records
5 Payroll
6 Medical Insurance
7 Employee Absences
15 Employee Conduct
16 Employee Discipline
16 Termination of Employment
17 Personnel Transfer
18 Worker's Compensation
18 Complaints and Grievances
18 Indemnification and Legal Defense of School Board Employees
18 Employee Electronic Communication with Students
18 Electronic Mail and Internet Policy
19 Sexual Harassment Policy
19 Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972
19 Employee Drug and Alcohol Policy
20 Evaluation Appeal Process
21 School Employee Bill of Rights
22 Teacher and School Employee Rights Regarding Student Discipline and Leave
23 Legal Indemnification Notice

NOTICE

This *Employee Handbook* attempts to summarize and discuss various policies and procedures of our school system for the information and convenience of our employees. This handbook carries a condensed version of many Ascension Parish School Board policies and administrative procedures and should not be substituted for the official Policy Manual. The Policy Manual contains the actual operational policies of the Board and is revised continuously. Copies of the Ascension Parish School Board Policy Manual can be found at the School Board Office and on our website at www.ascensionschools.org. If there are any discrepancies between this handbook and the official Policy Manual, the Policy Manual will prevail. Likewise, if there are any discrepancies between this handbook and state or federal law, the applicable law will prevail.

This handbook has been prepared as a guide for employment and includes practices, responsibilities, and benefits for the employees of the Ascension Parish School Board. All employees are expected to read, understand, and comply with the provisions of the handbook. If you have any questions about any handbook provisions, please consult the Human Resources Department. Employees are also encouraged to fully review the School Board's complete policies found online, or at the School Board Office.

The language in this handbook is not intended to create a contract between the Ascension Parish School Board and its employees, and it should not be construed as promising or guaranteeing continued benefits or employment. Unless you have a written contract of employment with the Ascension Parish School Board, all employment with the Ascension Parish School Board is at- will and nothing contained in this handbook is intended to alter the at-will status of its employees.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Ascension Parish School Board that no person in the school district shall, on the basis of age, race, color, creed, disability, religion, national origin, veteran status in its educational programs and activities, sex, or similar personal distinction be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination in regard to employment, retention, promotion, transfer, or dismissal in any educational program or activity under the jurisdiction of the board.
Any individual having a question about this policy or concern that the policy is not being followed should immediately contact the Superintendent at 1100 Webster Street, Donaldsonville, LA, 70346, and 225-391-7000 or 225-257-2000

ASCENSION PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CORE VALUES

LEADERSHIP

Positively Influencing Each Other

- By acknowledging leadership as not a position, but a disposition
- By sharing knowledge and expertise that shapes our vision and future
- By understanding various perspectives and leveraging the strengths of others
- By committing to truth, integrity, justice and emotional intelligence

LEARNING

Embracing New Opportunities for Each Other

- By identifying areas of new learning
- By engaging with others to share knowledge
- By creating opportunities for personal growth and the growth of others
- By accepting change and innovation with flexibility, creativity and determination

SERVICE

Relentless Commitment to Each Other

- By using individual talents to collectively benefit others
- By recognizing the unique needs of each individual
- By committing to hard work, equity and removing barriers
- By accepting and finding solutions to challenges through integrity, compassion and honesty

TEAMWORK

Believing in Each Other

- By sharing accountability for organizational tasks, goals and activities
- By assisting others and seeking help from others
- By embracing challenges to achieve common goals with positive attitudes
- By committing to behaviors of respect, tolerance and trust

OUR MISSION

Focusing on Each and Every Student.

To provide every child the high-quality education necessary to success in an ever-changing world.

OUR VISION

Creating Opportunities.

A world in which every child is prepared to successfully pursue postsecondary opportunities choice.

OUR PURPOSE

Providing Quality Experiences Every Day.

Ascension Public Schools will work in unison to provide daily quality experiences for students so they have every opportunity to attain high levels of academic development

I. EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONNEL

Employees are hired by a letter from the Superintendent. Prior to receipt of the employment letter, newly hired employees are required to submit (to) the following: (a) necessary information for a criminal background check; (b) drug screening; (c) pre-employment forms and documentation. Initial employment is always contingent upon satisfactory reports from the criminal background check and drug screening. All employees are required to indicate acknowledging receipt of their Employee Handbook.

II. CRIMINAL HISTORY OF APPLICANTS

The School Board shall require, in accordance with state law, all applicants for employment with the School Board to submit necessary information regarding their backgrounds. A prospective employee that may be employed in a position having responsibility for the care, control, supervision and/or discipline of minor children shall be required to provide authorization for the disclosure of any information regarding past criminal activities.

Prospective employees are responsible for scheduling and completing fingerprint and/or criminal background check prior to start date of their employment. No employee will start work until fingerprinting has been cleared through the database.

Please note the following:
(1) No person who has been convicted of or has plead nolo contendere to crimes outlined in state law shall be hired as a teacher, substitute teacher, or other employee.
(2) Any employee who upon the final conviction of such of any crimes enumerated, or who has plead nolo contendere, may be dismissed in accordance with statutory provision.
(3) Any other school employee having supervisory or disciplinary authority over school children may be dismissed if such employee is convicted of or pleads nolo contendere to enumerated crimes.

III. PERSONNEL RECORDS (Reference Policy GAK)

A personnel file shall be accurately maintained in the central administrative office for each present employee. Each employee has the right to view his/her personnel file. He/She should contact the Director of Human Resources via written request to access this record. The contents of a school employee's personnel file shall not be divulged to third parties without the expressed written consent of the school employee, except when ordered by a court or a subpoena, or in accordance with School Board policy (Reference Policy GAK).

No document (except routine record keeping) shall be placed in an employee's personnel file until that school employee has been presented with the original document and a copy prior to filing. The employee shall sign the original document acknowledging receipt of the copy. The signature shall not be construed as an agreement on the contents of the document. If an employee refuses to sign a document pertaining to a disciplinary action taken against an employee, the supervisor presenting the documents should an additional witness sign to attest that the employee was presented with the document but refused to sign prior to the document being placed in that employee's personnel file. Refusal to sign the documents may result in other disciplinary actions.

Any rebuttal or response to a document placed in an employee's personnel file shall be submitted by the employee within fifteen (15) school days of the date the original document was signed. The time period may be extended for ten (10) days provided a written request is made for such an extension within the original fifteen (15) day period.

IV. PAYROLL

A. Paychecks will be distributed on or about the 15th of each month for 9- and 9 ½-month employees, and on or about the 25th of the month for 10, 11, and 12-month employees. If the 15th or 25th falls on a weekend, those checks will be distributed on the last working day prior to the 15th or 25th. Dates of paychecks and pay period cutoff dates will be made available to employees each year. All employees will be paid over a 12-month period.

B. Direct Deposit of paychecks is mandatory for all employees. For any changes or questions regarding direct deposit, please contact payroll at payroll@apsb.org.

C. Mandatory Deductions. Law requires the following payroll deductions:

- Withholding for federal and state income taxes
- Medicare deductions for employees hired after May 1, 1986
- Retirement (FICA for part-time employees)
- Garnishments, tax levies, etc.

D. Voluntary Deductions

- Medical Insurance
- Dental Insurance
- Vision Insurance
- Supplemental Insurances
- 403(b)/457(b) Annuity
- United Way
- Organization Dues

E. Credit for Experience and Advanced Degrees

An employee on the Teacher Salary Schedule will be placed on the experience level corresponding to the number of years of qualified experience that has been verified *on our official form.* The form is located on the Human Resources section of the APSB website. Qualified experience includes full time experience in a state-approved public or private school or in an American school in a foreign country. Full-time university teaching experience (but not graduate assistantships) is also counted, as is experience at the State Department of Education, if the position requires a teaching certificate. Only one year of experience may be earned in any one school year. He/she will be paid for the highest degree that appears on his/her teaching certificate. When a teacher is awarded an advanced degree, he/she will be paid according to the salary schedule for that degree, beginning with the payroll period following the date that the degree is placed on his/her teaching certificate.

A new employee not on the Teacher Salary Schedule will be placed at the zero step of the pay

schedule, which corresponds, to his/her position, in accordance with policy GBA. New hires hired in a non-certified position can receive credit up to 5 years of prior experience and have their salary adjusted in accordance with APSB Salary Schedule. Further instructions are located on APSB's Human Resources Section on our website.

F. Compensatory Time

Personnel who are eligible for overtime compensation shall be allowed to bank overtime as compensatory (comp) time for the time worked in excess of forty (40) hours per week.

Eligible employees are those employees who have been classified as nonexempt for purposes of overtime compensation in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act. Therefore, as a condition of employment and for use of compensatory time in lieu of overtime payment, the Ascension Parish School Board shall allow the use of compensatory time off in lieu of payment at a rate of time and a half.

The following conditions shall apply:

- Employees may bank up to 120 hours (120 = 80 hrs of overtime x 1.5).
- Employees will be allowed to use banked comp time with prior approval from their immediate supervisor.
- Any employee must get approval from the appropriate director before working any overtime.

Refer to Policy GBAA for further information.

V. MEDICAL INSURANCE (Reference Policy EGA)

Medical Insurance may be elected by full-time employees through the Ascension Parish School Board Medical Insurance Plan. The School Board pays a portion of the premium, and the employee pays the remainder as a payroll deduction. Employees may elect not to have coverage. Full-time employees are also provided dental and vision coverage at no cost to them, and may elect these coverages for family members, at an additional cost to be paid by the employee. Open Enrollment occurs each year in which employees are able to make insurance benefit changes during the selected time period. These elections will be effective for the following benefit year, beginning on November 1. Employee's insurance coverages become effective the 1st of the month after 30 days of being hired. Please check with the Human Resources Department to verify your coverage.

Employees should notify the Human Resources Department as soon as possible of any changes in dependents or beneficiaries so that there will be no lapse in coverage. To add coverage for a newborn child, the employee must contact the insurance personnel in the Human Resources Department to complete necessary paperwork and submit required documents within 30 days of the child's birth. Employees should also notify the Human Resources Department as soon as a covered dependent becomes ineligible for medical insurance. Dependents become ineligible at age 26 and coverage ends on the last day of the month in which the dependent turns 26. Any qualifying event changes must occur within 30 days of the event. Failure to contact the Human Resources Department within this time frame or failure to submit required documents may result in lapse of insurance coverage.

VI. EMPLOYEE ABSENCES (Reference Policy GBRB)

A. Reporting Absences

All employees are required to notify their immediate supervisor as soon as reasonably possible in advance of any absence. In addition, all employees are required to enter absences in LINQ Time. In addition to the LINQ Time entry, employees requiring a substitute in their absence will need to contact to Kelly Services. Violations of this policy may also result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

B. Employee Attendance

The following procedures will be used to enforce the APSB Employee Attendance Policy, Policy GBRB.

1. If an employee is absent beyond his or her sick leave allocation for the current year, he or she may have a conference with the Principal or Supervisor to discuss the excessive absences.
    a. Written documentation will be kept by the Principal or Supervisor indicating that a conference was held to discuss absences.
    b. A copy of the documentation will be given to the employee and to Human Resources for filing in the employee's personnel file.
2. If an employee's absences continue, they are in direct violation of Policy GBRB and may be subject to corrective disciplinary actions.
    a. If an employee's absences continue, the Principal or Supervisor will submit a letter of recommendation to the Superintendent for appropriate disciplinary action to be taken.
    b. A copy of this letter will be given to the employee and Human Resources for filing in the employee's personnel file.
3. In a conference with the employee, the Principal or Supervisor and the Superintendent or designee will discuss his/her recommendations, which may include suspension or termination.

C. Time Clock Procedure

All employees (non-exempt) are required to use the time clock system to record their hours worked. Non-exempt employees are required to clock in and out for payroll and attendance purposes. Exempt employees may be required to use a time clock for attendance purposes at the discretion of their Supervisor. Employees should clock in no more than seven (7) minutes before or after the scheduled shift and clock out more than seven (7) minutes before or after the scheduled shift. If an employee misses the window for clocking into the timekeeping system, the employee should notify the Supervisor as soon as possible. The supervisor will manually enter the employee's work hours via the timekeeping system. Employees who repeatedly miss time clock entries will be subject to disciplinary action.

D. Prohibited Time Clock Procedures

Employees are strictly prohibited from using another employee's assigned employee number to clock in or clock out for another employee. Any employee found clocking in or clocking out for another employee will be subject to disciplinary actions up to and including termination. Any employee allowing another employee to use his/her employee number to clock in/out for that person will also be subject to disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

E. Sick Leave

Each 9-, 9.5-, and 10-month employee shall be granted 10 days absence per year for personal illness, extenuating circumstances or other emergencies without loss of pay. 12-month employees shall be granted 12 such days. However, no employee shall be allowed any sick leave until he/she reports for duty and

performs work. Unused sick leave, shall be allowed to accumulate to the credit of the employee without limitation. Any employee who begins employment in the second month of the school year or later will earn sick leave according to the following schedule:

Employees Hired	**9, 9.5, 10-month employees**	**12-month employees**
In the month of July	--	12 days
In the month of August	10 days	11 days
In the month of September	9 days	10 days
In the month of October	8 days	9 days
In the month of November	7 days	8 days
In the month of December	6 days	7 days
In the month of January	5 days	6 days
In the month of February	4 days	5 days
In the month of March	3 days	4 days
In the month of April	2 days	3 days
In the month of May	1 day	2 days
In the month of June	0 days	1 days

Employees on Louisiana Extended Sick Leave, Leave Without Pay or on Worker's Compensation will not automatically receive their sick leave at the beginning of the fiscal year, but will receive their sick days once they physically report to work each fiscal year.

An employee who is absent for six (6) or more consecutive days shall be required to present a certificate from a physician certifying such absence upon return to work. In the case of repeated absences of less than six days because of illness, APSB reserves the right to require verification of illness. Should a pattern of behavior so warrant, upon the request of the Superintendent or his/her designee, the employee shall be required to provide a certificate from a physician specified by the school system, in order to verify the existence of a medical disability. (See Policy GBRIB)

All sick leave accumulated by a teacher or school employee, but not a bus driver, shall be vested in the teacher or employee. If a teacher or employee transfers to another public-school system in Louisiana, he/she can be credited with the number of days vested, according to Policy GBRIB. This information is included on the form that is given to new hires for credit for years of experience.

The School Board will pay an employee upon retirement, or to the employee's heirs or assigned upon his/her death prior to retirement, for any unused sick leave, not to exceed 45 days. Such pay shall be at the daily rate of pay paid to the employee at the time of his/her retirement or death.

Reference School Board Policy GBRIB for further information.

SEVERANCE PAY UPON DEFERRED RETIREMENT OPTION PROGRAM (DROP)

Any employee of the School Board who participates in the *Deferred Retirement Option Program* (DROP) shall be eligible for and may elect to receive **a one-time basis severance pay** (accrued sick leave up to a maximum of forty-five (45) days) upon entering DROP on the same basis as any other employee who retires; otherwise, any accrued sick leave shall be paid only upon final retirement of the employee.

F. Bereavement (Reference policy GBRIB). Two (2) days bereavement leave shall be granted to employees in the event of the death of an immediate family member without the absence(s) being charged to either sick leave or annual leave.

Immediate family shall be defined as spouse and children; mother and father or that of the spouse; brothers and sisters and their spouses or that of the spouse; and the employee's grandparents, spouse's grandparents, grandchildren, daughter-in-law, and son-in-law.

If additional days are requested, the employee may utilize a maximum of 3 sick days if there are sick days remaining. If the employee has exhausted all sick leave, the time will be deducted from pay. The principal or department head shall be responsible for verifying bereavement leave requested.

Reference School Board Policy GBRIB for further information.

G. Extended Sick Leave (Reference Policy GBRIB). If an employee is absent after having exhausted all his/her accumulated sick leave, he/she shall be docked a full day's pay for each day's absence, with the following exception:

- A full-time employee who has exhausted all accumulated sick leave and is absent due to a medical necessity in his/her immediate family (for the purpose of this type of extended leave, immediate family is defined as spouse, child, or parent of the employee) shall be granted up to 90 days of extended sick leave in a six-year period. The original application for extended sick leave, accompanied by a statement from a licensed physician certifying the need for the leave, must be submitted to the Human Resources Department prior to the extension of such leave. If an employee is unable to submit the application and physician's statement prior to the commencement of the leave, the application and statement shall be submitted as soon as practicable but no later than three days from the date the employee returns to work. Applications not received within the required time may be denied. Leave forms and additional leave information can be found at www.ascensionschools.org/employees/human-resources/employee-leaves-of-absence. Employees on approved extended medical leave shall be paid at a rate of 65% of the daily rate of pay that they were making at the time the leave began. Employees on extended medical leave may not be employed elsewhere unless **all** the following conditions are met:
    - The employment is no more than 20 hours per week.
    - The employee has worked at the part-time job at least 120 days prior to the inception of the extended medical leave.
    - The doctor who recommended the extended medical leave certifies that the part-time employment will not interfere with the purpose of the leave.

NOTE: Medical necessity shall be the result of a catastrophic illness or injury, which means a life-threatening, chronic, or incapacitating condition.

H. Personal Leave (Reference Policy GBRIA). Teachers and all other employees, except bus drivers and those who receive annual leave, are eligible for four days of personal leave during each school year. Personal leave is to be used as determined by the individual. Notice must be given to the employee's immediate supervisor at least 24 hours prior to taking such leave. The four personal days are neither cumulative nor payable upon death or retirement. Personal leave shall be charged to and deducted from current or accumulated personal leave. If no accumulated personal leave remains, the employee's full pay shall be docked.

I. Maternity Leave (Reference Policy GBRIC). The Ascension Parish School Board shall grant to regularly employed employees maternity leave for time before and after childbirth upon proper application to the Superintendent for maternity leave. Such request shall be made prior to the fifth month of pregnancy and shall be accompanied by a physician's statement attesting to the need of the leave for maternity purposes.

Employees desiring to use current and accumulated sick leave days in lieu of maternity leave shall state such request and anticipated number of days to be used on the application for sick leave, in accordance with provisions found in School Board Policy GBRIB, Sick Leave.

J. Vacation Leave (Reference Policy GBRK)

All twelve-month employees shall be granted annual leave. Employees hired during a fiscal year shall be granted 2.5 days of vacation after 3 months of employment, and .834 days of vacation for each month worked during fiscal year thereafter, up to a maximum of ten (10) days. All other twelve-month employees shall be granted annual leave as follows:

Years of Service	Annual Leave Granted (In days)	Monthly Accrual Rate (In days)
0 - 4	10	0.834
5	11	0.917
6	12	1.000
7	13	1.084
8	14	1.167
9	15	1.250
10	16	1.334
11	17	1.417
12	18	1.500
13	19	1.584
14+	20	1.667

Vacation leave shall be credited on a monthly basis according to the accrual rates indicated above. Annual leave may be accumulated and carried forward as earned up to a maximum of twenty (20) working days. If any employee's annual leave balance reaches twenty (20) days, the accrual of leave will stop until the employee's balance falls below the maximum of twenty (20) days.

Certificated employees. For purposes of this policy, certificated employees are defined as those employees who possess a certificate issued by the Louisiana Department of Education at the time of their initial hiring by the Ascension Parish School Board. At the time of hire, such certificated employees will be granted vacation according to the schedule above. Total years of service, both in and out of the school district as a certificated employee, shall be counted for the initial allocation of annual leave and vacation accrual for that employee.

Non-certificated employees. For purposes of this policy, non-certificated employees are all employees who are not certificated employees. At the time of hire of a non-certificated employee, the Superintendent is authorized to award the non-certificated employee credit for prior years of experience or service worked outside of the Ascension Parish School Board school district if, in the exclusive discretion of the Superintendent, the prior experience or service aligns to the new employment position with the Ascension

Parish School Board. The maximum credit that will be granted in this manner shall be five (5) years.

Please refer to Policy GBRK.

K. Professional Leave (Reference Policy GBRH). An employee may be granted professional leave to attend an educationally related conference, meeting, or convention, if such attendance is considered to be in the best interest of the school system. The employee's supervisor and/or Superintendent must approve professional leave in advance. The request for professional leave must be submitted on the official request at least two weeks in advance of the requested leave, but as far in advanced as possible.

L. Sabbatical Medical Leave (Reference Policy GBRHA). An employee with a valid teaching certificate may apply for medical sabbatical leave, which shall be accompanied by a statement from a licensed physician certifying that the leave is medically necessary. Teachers are eligible for two semesters immediately following twelve or more semesters of consecutive service or one semester immediately following six semesters of consecutive service. Leave without pay is deemed to be an interruption of consecutive service (i.e. a docked day). The pay will be 65% of the teacher's pay at the time the leave begins. Medical sabbatical leaves that begin after a semester has started will terminate at the end of that semester (or at the end of the next semester, if the leave was for two semesters). Sabbatical medical leave must be applied for on the approved form and submitted to the superintendent at least 60 days preceding the beginning of the semester of the school year for which leave is requested. In case of emergency, the request may be submitted 30 days prior.

An employee on sabbatical medical leave may not be otherwise employed unless all the following criteria are met:

- Employment is for no more than 20 hours per week.
- The employee has been working in this part-time job 120 or more days prior to the beginning of the sabbatical leave
- The physician who recommended the leave certifies that part-time employment does not impair the purpose for which the leave is required.
- The School Board authorizes the part-time work.
- The employee is not working for any public or private elementary or secondary school in Louisiana or in any other state.

Sabbatical request forms can be requested through the Human Resources Department (leave@apsb.org) and also found on the leave section of the APSB Human Resources website (www.ascensionschools.org/employees/human-resources/employee-leaves-of-absence).

M. Sabbatical Leave for Professional Development (Reference Policy GBRHA). Teachers are eligible for two semesters of sabbatical leave for professional development immediately following twelve or more semesters of consecutive service or one semester immediately following six semesters of consecutive service. Leave without pay is deemed to be an interruption of consecutive service (i.e. a docked day). They are required to earn nine (9) undergraduate credit hours, provided such hours directly improve the person's skills and knowledge as a teacher, or six (6) graduate credit hours, or be certified as a fulltime student at an institution of higher learning accredited by the respective State Board of Education or territorial board in which such institution is located.

The pay will be 65% of the teacher's pay at the time the leave begins. Sabbatical leave for professional

improvement must be applied for on the approved form and submitted to the Superintendent at least 60 days preceding the beginning of the semester of the school year for which leave is requested. Teachers on professional sabbatical leave are prohibited from employment by any public or private elementary or secondary school in Louisiana or any other state.

Sabbatical request forms can be requested through the Human Resources Department (leave@apsb.org) and also found on the leave section of the APSB Human Resources website (www.ascensionschools.org/employees/human-resources/employee-leaves-of-absence).

N. Military Leave (Reference Policy GBRID). Leave with pay for military purposes, not to exceed fifteen (15) working days in one calendar year, shall be granted to 12-month employees or to employees called to emergency duty during the school year. Leave without pay shall be granted when leave is for more than fifteen (15) working days or to other employees who do not qualify for leave with pay. All requests for military leave shall be presented to the School Board for approval and must be accompanied by proper documents attesting to call to duty.

An employee on extended military leave (longer than fifteen (15) days) must apply for reinstatement of his/her former position within thirty (30) days after end of leave; he/she shall then be reinstated at the salary then in force in the salary schedule. The Board may transfer the employee to a position of comparable status if, in the opinion of the Board, such action is beneficial to the school system.

O. Family and Medical Leave (Reference Policy GBRIBA).

1. FMLA

The Ascension Parish School Board shall permit qualified employees to take up to twelve (12) workweeks of unpaid leave in a twelve (12) month period for family and medical reasons. Employees qualifying for family and temporary medical leave shall have been employed by the Board for the previous twelve (12) months prior to the date of the leave to be taken. For the purposes of this policy, the 12-month period shall begin the 1st day of qualified FMLA leave. Such unpaid leave may only be taken for the following reasons:

1. For the birth of the employee's son or daughter or for the placement with the employee of a son or daughter for adoption or foster care, and to care for the newborn or newly placed child;
2. To care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition;
3. Because of a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform one or more of the essential functions of his or her job; and
4. Because of any "qualifying exigency" arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a military member on covered active duty status (or has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty).

Leave shall be taken for birth or placement of a child only within twelve (12) months of the birth or placement.

Generally, the time taken for family and medical leave shall be on a continuous basis. However, the employee shall be permitted to take leave on an intermittent or reduced basis to care for a seriously ill family member or the employee's own illness when medically necessary. An employee may take intermittent leave for the birth or adoption of a child only with the Board's approval.

If a teacher's period of absence on intermittent leave amounts to more than 20% of classroom time, the teacher may be required to take continuous leave throughout the treatment period or be placed in an equivalent position that would not be so disruptive to the classroom.

An employee shall be required to request leave by providing the Board at least thirty (30) days' notice prior to any leave being taken for the birth or adoption of a child, or for any planned or foreseeable medical treatment. For emergency treatment, or circumstances where thirty (30) days' notice cannot be provided, the employee shall notify the Board of the leave to be taken as soon as possible. Medical certification may be required by the Board at the time leave is requested.

The employee shall be required to substitute any accumulated sick leave and/or annual leave for any family and medical leave time requested. If paid leave is used by an employee, the Board shall provide only enough unpaid family and medical leave time to total the allowed twelve (12) week period.

Any employee taking family and medical leave shall have the right to return to their previous position or an equivalent position with no loss in benefits at the end of the leave period. An employee returning to service at the end of their leave period for personal medical reasons shall be required to present to the Human Resources Department a letter from their doctor certifying that the employee is able to return to work.

2. Military Family Leave

Qualifying Exigency Leave

Eligible employees who are the spouse, son, daughter, or parent of a military member may take up to 12 weeks of FMLA leave during any 12-month period to address the common issues that arise when a military member is deployed to a foreign country. This provision applies to the families of members of both the active duty and reserve components of the Armed Forces.

Military Caregiver Leave

Eligible employees who are the spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin of a covered service member may take up to 26 weeks of FMLA leave during a single 12-month period to care for the service member who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness incurred or aggravated in the line of duty on active duty. This provision applies to the families of members of both the active duty and reserve components of the Armed Forces.

A covered service member is either:

- A current member of the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves) who is under treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is in outpatient status, or is on the temporary disability retired list, for an illness, or
- A veteran of the Armed Forces (including the National Guard or Reserves) discharged within the five-year period preceding the date the employee first takes military caregiver leave to care for the veteran and who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a qualifying serious injury or illness.

P. Leave Without Pay (Reference Policy GBRIA).

The Superintendent may grant leave of absence, without pay, to any regularly employed teacher or other employee at its discretion for periods of time not to exceed one year. Such leave shall be granted by the Superintendent, upon proper request in writing by the employee, whenever in the discretion of the Superintendent such leave is in the best interest of the school district. Request in writing must include the

employee's name, position, school or location, specific dates of leave without pay request and an explanation of the reason for requesting leave without pay.

At the time leave without pay is granted, the Superintendent may declare at its discretion that all or certain of such leaves shall not be deemed to interrupt active service for sabbatical leave purposes.
Leave without pay is not guaranteed and is at the discretion of the Superintendent. Any Leave Without Pay Request will require HR to contact the employee's supervisor regarding the employee's leave without pay request.

Continuation of benefits
Employees will be allowed to continue benefits while on leave without pay but will be required to pay both the employee and employer portion of premiums after 12 weeks on leave without pay. Payment plans must be arranged in advanced with the Insurance Department. Payments are due by the date your regular payroll.

In the event leave without pay is granted for a period beyond 12 weeks, the employee will be responsible for 100% of benefit premiums after the initial 12-week period.

For benefits that may be continued beyond the 12 weeks, the employee must arrange in advance to pay any required premium(s)-*both employee and employer portions*-directly to the insurance office. If the employee chooses not to continue your sponsored coverage, or if you do not pay your premium(s) on time, your coverage will end on the last day of the month for which premiums or contributions are paid.

It is the employee's responsibility to contact the Insurance Department to arrange payments. Failure to contact the Insurance Department prior to leave without pay may result in loss of coverage. Contact information for the Insurance Department can be found on the Human Resource's website: www.ascensionschools.org/employees/human-resources/insurance.

Q. Jury Duty (Reference Policy GBRIH)

The Board shall grant a leave of absence to any regularly employed person of the school system who has been called or subpoenaed to serve jury duty. Such leave shall be granted for the period of time required to serve such jury duty without loss of sick, emergency, or personal leave or any other benefit. Jury duty shall not be deemed to interrupt service accumulated toward sabbatical leave.

Anyone serving on jury duty shall receive his/her regular salary and may keep the compensation received as juror. Said employee shall be responsible for submitting verification of call or subpoena for jury duty to the Superintendent or his designee to be eligible to receive leave for jury duty. Any employee abusing said leave shall be subject to disciplinary action.

VII. EMPLOYEE CONDUCT (Reference Policy GBRA)

Ascension Parish School Board's Employee Conduct and Work Rules ensures orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment. Ascension Parish School Board expects employees and others who may from time to time be engaged to provide services, such as temporary personnel, consultants and independent contractors, to follow these rules of conduct while on Ascension Parish School Board premises, attending APSB functions or otherwise performing work-related activity.

In addition to maintaining and enforcing this policy to protect the interests and safety of all employees and the

organization, Ascension Parish School Board complies with all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations concerning employer/employee rights and obligations.

As always, as employees of Ascension Parish School Board, we conduct ourselves with our CORE values in mind: Leadership, Learning, Service and Teamwork.

VIII. EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINE (Reference Policy GBK)

The Superintendent and his/her designee shall possess the authority to discipline employees when an employee's behavior warrants such action. A principal shall have the authority to recommend to the Superintendent when appropriate that employees at the school in which he/she is employed should be disciplined.

Discipline of an employee shall be progressive in nature such that penalties for poor job performance or broken rules become increasingly harsh as similar or related conditions continue or infractions are repeated. Such progressive discipline, however, shall not inhibit the Superintendent's authority or, in the case of certain employees, the School Board's authority, to discipline, suspend, or terminate an employee based on the circumstances of any single event. Documentation of employee behavior, employee performance, and any disciplinary action taken shall be properly and thoroughly recorded.

Should any disciplinary measure become necessary, any documentation shall be considered confidential and treated in accordance with statutory provisions and School Board policy.

School Board Policy GBK outlines disciplinary measures in accordance with employee's duties with the School Board.

IX. TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

A. Retirement (Reference Policy GBQ).

All employees shall be required, as a condition of employment, to become members of the retirement system for which they are eligible. Employees shall also be required to officially inform the Ascension Parish School Board in writing of their plans to retire.

Employees contemplating retirement should contact the Human Resources Department at least six months prior to the date of retirement. Each retirement system employs representatives to assist in computing your retirement benefits and official retirement date. Employees have a duty to check with the appropriate retirement system to assure they are qualified to retire prior to making any retirement decisions. The Human Resources Department can guide you through this process. Contact information for the Retirement Department can be found on the Human Resources website- https://www.ascensionschools.org/employees/human-resources/retirement.

B. Resignation (see Policy GBO). Employees who wish to resign their position should complete a resignation form indicating the reason for the resignation and submit it to the Superintendent for acceptance. The form can be obtained from the principal/supervisor or the Human Resources Department. In the event that an employee communicates to another employee who works in a supervisory role, whether written or verbally, that they will no longer work for APSB, it is not required that the employee complete the separation form for their employment to be terminated. In such an instance, the immediate supervisor or the APSB employee in a

supervisory role shall complete the separation form on the employee's behalf and include details of the employee's communication.

The Superintendent shall provide written acceptance of the resignation to the employee, including the date of acceptance and setting forth the effective date of resignation.

Once the Superintendent has accepted the resignation, it may not be withdrawn by the employee. The immediate supervisor shall be informed in writing of the resignation. The resignation and its acceptance should be reported as information to the Board at the next regular or special meeting. Any employee who intends to resign after the end of the school session shall be urged to submit his/her letter of resignation as soon as possible.

C. Dismissal. Administrators will strive to assist personnel in every way possible to perform their duties satisfactorily. Every reasonable effort shall be made to avoid the necessity of dismissing personnel at any level; however, the Superintendent may dismiss any employee in accordance with state laws and regulations. Please refer to the following School Board policies concerning dismissal: GBG, GBI, GBK, BL, GBN, and GBRA. If an employee is absent for ten (10) or more days without explanation or approved leave, APSB may consider the job as abandoned and the employee may be terminated, unless the employee can provide acceptable and verifiable evidence of extenuating circumstances. The Superintendent and/or his/her designee shall be responsible for determining acceptability of evidence of extenuating circumstances.

X. PERSONNEL TRANSFER (Reference Policy GBM)

A. Voluntary Transfers.

Employees who voluntarily request a transfer to another location or position shall submit such request in accordance with School Board Policy GBM. Such requests shall be submitted on or before the date specified in the policy in order to be considered for the next school year.

A teacher transferred to a school or position must be certified and qualified for the position to which transferred. Should a person request reassignment to a lesser position, such personnel, upon reassignment, shall be placed in the salary schedule at the level of the new position.

B. Involuntary Transfers.

The Superintendent may transfer any teacher or other employee, including personnel employed as principals and supervisors, from one position, school or grade to another by giving written notice to the teacher or employee of such intention to transfer. Such transfer shall not be for political or personal reasons. No transfers of instructional personnel shall be initiated during the regular school term, except in emergencies or promotional instances where transfers are required to preserve quality instruction.

The principal shall have the authority to transfer employees at the school in which the principal is employed, subject to the approval of the Superintendent.

Transfer decisions shall be based upon performance, effectiveness, and qualifications as applicable to each specific position. Effectiveness, as determined by the Board's personnel evaluation program, shall be the primary reason for considering a transfer. Conversely, seniority or tenure shall not be used as the primary reason when making any decisions to transfer an employee.

XI. WORKER'S COMPENSATION (Reference Policy EGAA)

The Ascension Parish School Board shall authorize and direct the Superintendent to ensure worker's compensation coverage for its employees. Employees injured while acting in their official capacity shall be entitled to appropriate workers' compensation benefits prescribed under state statutes for the period of time while injured.

Reporting of accidents (Reference Policy EGAA)

Should an accident occur to an employee while in the course of his/her duties, the employee **shall immediately** notify his/her supervisor.

XII. COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES (Reference Policy GAE)

Any employee of the Ascension Parish School Board shall have the right to appeal the application of policies and administrative decisions affecting him/her. The employee shall be assured freedom from restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination, or reprisal in presenting his/her appeal with respect to a personal grievance. All grievances shall be handled per School Board Policy GAE.

XIII. INDEMNIFICATION AND LEGAL DEFENSE OF SCHOOL BOARD EMPLOYEES

In accordance with Louisiana Revised Statute 17:416.4, the Ascension Parish School Board follows the Legislature's regulations as required statutorily.

XIV. EMPLOYEE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS

Louisiana Revised Statute 17:81requires that the Ascension Parish School Board (APSB) develop and implement policies, procedures, and guidelines relative to electronic communications between students and teachers. To implement this law, the Ascension Parish School Board adopted Policy GAMIA.

The Ascension Parish School Board recognizes that the reputations and careers of students and educators have been damaged due to inappropriate electronic communications; therefore, it is the intent of the Ascension Parish School Board to make all employees and students aware of the expectations and procedures regarding the proper use of all telecommunication devices and computers.

These procedures and guidelines establish and ensure that the staff and parents are informed regarding the expectations relative to electronic communication by an employee with a student enrolled at that school and vice versa. They provide a protocol for the management and administration of the components of the Ascension Parish School Board's policy relating to employee electronic communication with students.

These guidelines are not intended to limit or impede the use of technology as a meaningful teaching tool.

Reference School Board Policy GAMIA.

XV. ELECTRONIC MAIL AND INTERNET POLICY (Reference Policy EFA)

This document describes the School Board's policy with regard to access and disclosure of electronic mail messages sent or received by office personnel, the access and research function of the Internet and the use of the office computer systems. All rules, policies and procedures concerning work-related activities and correspondence apply equally to the use of electronic mail and Internet access.

The School Board respects the individual privacy of its employees; however, employee privacy does not extend

to the employee's work-related conduct or to the use of the School Board's equipment or supplies such as devices, mail, and other forms of communication. You should be aware that the following guidelines may affect your privacy in the workplace.

Reference School Board Policy EFA for additional information.

XVI. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Reference APSB Policy GAEAA Title VII Employee Sexual Harassment.

XVII. TITLE IX OF THE EDUCATION AMENDMENTS ACT OF 1972

The Ascension Parish School Board desires to provide a safe school environment that allows all students equal access and opportunities in the School District's academic, extracurricular, and other educational support programs, services, and activities. The School Board does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the education program or activity that it operates. The School Board is required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) and Part 106 of Title 34 of the United States Code of Federal Regulations not to discriminate on the basis of sex in the education program or activity that it operates, including admission and employment. The School Board recognizes that sexual harassment is a form of discrimination on the basis of sex and the School Board prohibits sexual harassment as defined by Title IX and Part 106 of Title 34 of the United States Code of Federal Regulations.

Reference APSB Policy JAAA Title IX Sexual Harassment.

XVIII. DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

Reference the following APSB Policies for drug and alcohol policies: GAMD, Drug-Free Workplace; GAMEA, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Testing (general employees); GAMEB, Substance Abuse Testing for Holders of Commercial Drivers Licenses.

XIX. Evaluation Appeal Process

1. To appeal an evaluation, the evaluatee must complete the appropriate form and submit it to the Superintendent or his/her designee no later than 5 days after the signed and dated Teacher Evaluation.
2. The Superintendent will assign a team to review the evaluation records, including the NIET Observations, Student Learning Targets and Professional Responsibilities Survey.
3. Upon review of the records a hearing will be scheduled with the evaluatee within 10 calendar days of the receipt of the Appeal Form.
4. After the review of records and the evaluatee hearing, a written response will be provided to the employee within 30 calendar days of receipt of the Appeal Form. This written response will conclude the Appeal of Evaluation.

School Employee Bill of Rights

1. A school employee has the right to work in a safe, secure, and orderly environment that is conducive to learning and free from recognized dangers or hazards that are causing or likely to cause serious injury in accordance with R.S. 17:416.9 and 416.16.

2. A school employee has the right to work free from the fear of frivolous lawsuits, including the right to qualified immunity and to a legal defense, and to indemnification by the employing school board, pursuant to R.S. 17:416.4, 416.11, and 439, for actions taken in the performance of duties of the school employee's employment.

3. A school employee has the right to hold students accountable for disorderly conduct, in accordance with R.S. 17:416 and 416.14 and any city, parish, or other local public school board regulation.

4. A school employee has the right to have his professional judgment and discretion respected by school and district administrators in any disciplinary action taken by the school employee in accordance with school and district policy and with R.S. 17:416(A)(1)(a) and (b).

5. A school employee shall have the right to be involved in decisions regarding student behavior management in accordance with R.S. 17:416.8.

6. A school employee shall have the right to additional compensation in accordance with R.S. 17:418 and 419.2, and any compensation provided by any city, parish, or other local public school board regulation.

7. A school employee shall not have his wages reduced for any school year below the amount paid to the school employee in hourly wage or annual salary during the previous school year, nor shall the amount of the hourly wage or annual salary paid to any school employee be reduced at any time during an academic year in accordance with R.S. 17:422.6.

8. A school employee serving as a substitute teacher shall have the right to additional compensation as provided in R.S. 17:419.3.

9. A school employee has the right to be treated with civility and respect as provided in R.S. 17:416.12.

10. A school employee shall have the right to perform noncomplex medical procedures only if all the requirements in R.S. 17:436 have been met and documented.

11. A school employee shall have the right to administer medication only if all the requirements in R.S. 17:436.1 have been met and documented.

12. A school employee required by law or regulation to be trained for a specific job requirement shall be required to perform those specific duties only if they have received the mandated training and the training has been documented as required by law or regulation

13. A school employee shall have the right to professional development and career advancement and should be supported in advancing their careers, pursuant to R.S. 17:7.4, 7.7, and 7.8

14. A school employee has the right to complete only paperwork that is not excessively burdensome and that, if required by law or regulation, adheres to the law or regulation and does not result in overly cumbersome interpretations of that law or regulation.

NOTICE OF RIGHTS

Teacher and School Employee Rights Regarding Student Discipline and Leave

Disciplinary Action Rights:

Louisiana law provides teachers and school employees with the right to take disciplinary action, recommend disciplinary action, or complete a form or other documentation to initiate disciplinary action against a student who violates school rules or school policy or who interferes with the orderly educational process.

Teachers and school employees are encouraged to address student misconduct promptly and appropriately in accordance with applicable law and the policies and procedures of the Ascension Parish School Board.

No principal or other administrator may prohibit or discourage a teacher or school employee from taking disciplinary action, recommending disciplinary action, or completing a form to initiate disciplinary action against a student who violates school policy or interferes with the orderly educational process.

A principal or other administrator also may not retaliate against, or take adverse employment action against, a teacher or school employee because the employee takes disciplinary action, recommends disciplinary action, or completes a form to initiate disciplinary action against a student, provided that the employee's actions are taken in accordance with applicable law and Ascension Parish School Board policy.

School Board Policy Guidance:

The authority to take or request disciplinary action must be exercised in accordance with the policies and procedures adopted by the Ascension Parish School Board. Employees should use the disciplinary procedures, referral forms, reporting procedures, and other processes established by the school or school system.

Nothing in this notice authorizes an employee to use disciplinary measures that are prohibited by law or Ascension Parish School Board policy.

Questions regarding the appropriate disciplinary response to a student's conduct should be directed to the principal or the administrator designated by the Ascension Parish School Board.

Assault or Battery of a Teacher/School Employee:

Louisiana law provides special protections and leave rights when a school employee is injured or disabled while acting in an official capacity as a result of an assault or battery by a student or other person.

When an employee is eligible for statutory assault-and-battery sick leave, the leave is provided without reduction in pay and without reduction in the employee's accrued sick leave, subject to the requirements of applicable law. Depending upon the circumstances, medical certification may be required.

These statutory leave benefits are in addition to other sick leave otherwise available to eligible employees. The employee must follow the Ascension Parish School Board's procedures for reporting the incident, requesting leave, and providing any required medical documentation.

An employee who is injured while responding to, intervening in, or otherwise addressing an incident involving a student should promptly report the injury and circumstances of the incident to the employee's principal or supervisor and contact the appropriate supervisor or designee within the human resources department regarding applicable leave rights.

Personal Leave:

Eligible employees may also have personal leave available under applicable Louisiana law and Ascension Parish School Board policy. Personal leave is subject to the eligibility requirements, notice requirements, limitations, and procedures established by law and Ascension Parish School Board policy.

Employees should contact the human resources department if an assault, battery, or other student-related incident results in an injury, medical treatment, psychological treatment, physical rehabilitation, or an absence from work so that the employee's eligibility for applicable statutory and policy-based leave can be evaluated.

Legal Notice:

This notice is provided annually pursuant to La. R.S. 17:416(A)(1)(b)(i). It is intended to inform employees of rights provided by Louisiana law and does not replace or supersede applicable federal or state law or Ascension Parish School Board policies and procedures.

ASCENSION PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES--LEGAL DEFENSE AND INDEMNIFICATION RIGHTS

Notice to all Ascension Parish School Board Employees:

Should any public school employee be sued for damages by any student or any person qualified to bring suit on behalf of any student based on any action or statement or the omission of any action or statement by such employee when in the proper course and scope of his duties as defined by the school board employing such employee, then it shall be the obligation of said school board to provide such defendant with a legal defense to such suit including reasonable attorney fees, investigatory costs, and other related expenses. Should any such employee be cast in judgment for damages in such suit, it shall be the obligation of the school board employing such defendant to indemnify him fully against such judgment including all principal, interest, and costs, except that the school board shall not be responsible for any costs which the court stipulates are to be borne by a party other than the employee or school board.

If the school board provided the defense and the judgment makes an award to the employee for damages or other awards for costs or any fees, the employee shall reimburse the school board for its costs incurred for the defense. The requirement of reimbursement by the employee shall not exceed the award received by the employee.

Nothing in this Section shall require a school board to indemnify an employee against a judgment wherein there is a specific decree in the judgment that the action of the employee was maliciously, willfully, and deliberately intended to cause bodily harm or to harass or intimidate the student or where there is a specific decree in the judgment that the employee purposefully or with gross disregard of the facts ignored the complaints of the student, or the student's parent or guardian, that the student was being bullied and the bullying led to the physical harm or death of the student. (See LSA-R.S. 17:416.4)

Similar protections are afforded to select employees related to employee conduct during a search and seizure and during student discipline and intervention. (See LSA-R.S. 17:416 et seq, including but not limited to LSA-R.S. 416.1, 416.3, 416.6, 416.11). These rights are in addition to those noted in the Teacher Bill of Rights (LSA-R.S. 17:416.18), and all are subject to specific qualifications and limitations.