

# Griffin-Spalding County School System

## **Contractual Personnel Handbook**

2009-2010

Our system will be world class: the first choice for educating children and serving families.

Mission: Preparing students for tomorrow by providing a quality education today.

[www.spalding.k12.ga.us](http://www.spalding.k12.ga.us)

Dr. Curtis L. Jones, Jr., Superintendent

# DISCLAIMER

The Griffin-Spalding County School System's Contractual Personnel Handbook is provided so that each contractual employee can understand the conditions which are part of the employment agreement. The information contained in this manual and in subsequent updates should be studied thoroughly. A complete understanding of this manual will make it possible for the contractual employee to have a successful and meaningful working relationship with the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education.

The information contained in this manual is based on numerous sources including Federal and State laws, State and local board of education policies and procedures, as well as the contracts and agreements entered into between the school system and various employee benefit providers. The information as published is correct to the best of the school system's knowledge; however, laws, court decisions, and interpretations of law change over a period of time. Additionally, benefit provisions are likely to change frequently, particularly with respect to the various insurance and retirement benefits available to each contractual employee. Periodic updates of this manual will be provided to reflect these changes.

The information found in this manual is not meant to be, and should not be relied upon as legal advice or financial investment advice. If you have any questions regarding your legal rights, then you should contact your attorney. If you have any questions regarding benefits or financial investment decisions, then you should contact a qualified financial advisor. Any general questions about this manual should be directed to your immediate supervisor.

This manual supersedes all former manuals relating to personnel policies and administrative procedures for contractual personnel disseminated by the Griffin-Spalding County School System; however, it does not supersede the current manual in use entitled Policy Manual for Griffin-Spalding County School System.

# INTRODUCTION

The objective of this manual is to provide information which is essential for an adequate understanding of the rights and responsibilities of each professional staff member. It will also assist each individual in understanding the scope of benefits available to employees and to family members.

This array of laws, policies, procedures, regulations, benefits, rights, and responsibilities relating to personnel affairs has been assembled from various sources. These authorities and sources include Federal laws, Georgia laws, policies of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, policies of the Georgia Department of Education, and policies of the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education.

Several codes are used throughout this manual. The definitions are as follows: "O.C.G.A. 20-2-850" denotes Section 20-2-850 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated which is the law of the State of Georgia; "GBOE Rule JGI (160-4-8-.04)" denotes Georgia Board of Education Rule JGI (160-4-8-.04) which is the policy of the State Board. "GSCSS Policy GAM" signifies a local board adopted policy.

Every staff member must be aware that each session of Congress and the Georgia Legislature brings new laws and modifications to old laws. Each month may bring changes in the policies of the Georgia Department of Education and the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education. Fringe benefit provisions are also subject to alteration at any time. Queries concerning the accuracy and timeliness of any information in this manual should be addressed to an employee's immediate supervisor.

It is the policy of the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education not to discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, color, creed, religion, national origin, or disability in its educational programs, activities and employment practices.

# Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
<b>Disclaimer</b>	2
<b>Introduction</b>	2
<b>Absence from Duty</b>	
Authorized Absence With Full Pay Deduction	5
Bereavement Leave	5
Legal Leave (Witness or Jury Duty in Response to a Subpoena)	5
Family & Medical Leave	5
Military Leave	7
Leave for Personal or Professional Reasons (Daily)	8
Professional Study Leave (Annual)	8
Professional Leave - Creditable Service - TRS	9
Religious Leave	9
Sick Leave	9
Temporary Relief From Duty With Pay	10
Temporary Relief From Duty Without Pay	10
Unauthorized Absence	10
<b>Appeals</b>	
Complaint Resolution Procedures	10
Equal Opportunity Complaint Procedure	13
Nonrenewal of Contract (non-tenure status)	14
Nonrenewal of Contract or Demotion (tenure status)	15
Sexual Harassment	15
Termination of Contract (Grounds for Termination, Suspension or Demotion)	16
<b>Assignments</b>	
Assignment - General	16
Conflict of Interest	17
Reassignment (Voluntary and Involuntary)	17
Factors Affecting Reassignment	18
Notification of Reassignment	18
Reassignment After Leave of Absence	18
Transfers	18
Assignment of Professional Staff When Opening New School	18
Workload	19
<b>Benefits &amp; Services</b>	
Attendance Choices for Children of Employees	19
Credit Union	20
Direct Deposit of Payroll	20
Holidays	21
Payroll Deductions	21
Retirement	21
Unused Sick Leave Credit Toward Retirement (HB 203)	21
Sick Leave Bank	22
Workers' Compensation	24
<b>Certification</b>	
General Information	24
Applying for Certificates	24
Expiring Certificates	24
New Certificates	25
Newly-employed Teachers	25
Certification Tests	25

# Table of Contents Continued

	<u>page</u>
<b>Contracts</b>	
Annual Contract	25
Appraisal of Performance	26
Appraisal of Performance (Complaints)	26
Contract Salary	27
Creditable Experience	27
Criminal Records Check	31
Nonrenewal of Contract	14
Reduction in Force	31
Reprimand	32
Resignation from Contract	32
<b>Professional Standards Commission</b>	33
Educator Ethics Contact Information	33
Code of Ethics for Educators	33
Standards	34
Reporting	35
Disciplinary Action	35
Student Reporting of Acts of Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct	36
Cell Phones and Electronic Devices	36
Pledge of Allegiance	37
Public Relations	37
Solicitation of Funds	37
Test Data	37
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b>	
Drug-Free Workplace	37
State Eye Protection Standard	38
Personnel Smoking	38
<b>Salary Administration</b>	
Ajdustment for New Certificate	39
Advancement on the Salary Schedule	39
Browner Bonus	39
Certification Ineligibility	39
Creditable Experience	39
Extended Day/Year Salaries	39
Extra-duty Assignments	40
Extra-duty Supplements	40
Full-time Definition	40
Funding Adjustments	40
Minimum Salary for Teachers	40
Pay Dates	40
Placement - Initial	41
Retroactive Adjustments	41
Salary Deductions	41
<b>Staff-Community Relations</b>	
Attendance by Employees	41
Child Abuse and Neglect	41
Dress	42
<b>Staff Development</b>	
Components	42
Professional Learning Opportunities	43
<b>Contractual Handbook Acknowledgement (Sign and Return)</b>	44

# **ABSENCE FROM DUTY**

## **Authorized Absence With Full Pay Deduction**

A teacher may apply for authorized absence with full pay deduction in situations necessitating the absence of the teacher where the teacher has no control over the dates of the events involved and in situations which are not appropriately covered by sick/personal/professional leave.

Application for authorized absence with full pay deduction should be made in writing to the principal or immediate supervisor at least ten days prior to the proposed absence. The principal or immediate supervisor must forward the teacher's written request along with a recommendation to support or deny the request to the superintendent.

## **Bereavement Leave**

Up to 5 days of sick leave may be used for absence due to a death in the employee's immediate family. The term immediate family shall be interpreted to mean spouse, parent, children, sibling, grandparents, grandparents-in-law, parents-in-law, siblings-in-law, grandchild, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, step-parents, any relative living in the residence of the employee, or for any individual for whom you have medical power of attorney. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-850(c)) (GSCSS Policy GARH)

## **Legal Leave (Witness or Jury Duty in Response to a Subpoena)**

Employees subpoenaed as a witness before a court of law in a work related matter shall be allowed a leave of absence without loss of pay and without deduction of any amounts otherwise received as compensation for service as a teacher. The teacher that serves as a work related witness or on jury duty shall not have leave deducted from sick, personal or professional leave. No teacher utilizing witness or jury duty leave shall be required to pay the cost of employing a substitute teacher to serve during absence on such leave. A copy of the subpoena must be attached to the "Application for Personal/Professional Leave" and submitted to the principal or immediate supervisor prior to the absence. (GSCSS Policy GARH) \*\*\*Employees who are subpoenaed in an non-work related matter must use personal leave (if available) or the employee will be charged leave without pay.

## **Family & Medical Leave**

### **Eligibility**

Employees of the Griffin-Spalding County School System who have been employed for twelve (12) months or more and who worked at least 1250 hours during that time, are entitled to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid leave during a twelve (12) month period for the following:

1. The birth and first year care of a child;
2. The adoption or foster parent placement of a child;
3. The illness of an employee's spouse, child, or parent with respect to a serious health condition, defined as one that requires in-patient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility, or which requires continuing treatment by a health care provider;
4. The employee's own illness; or
5. Qualifying Exigency Leave for the spouse, child, parent or next of kin of members of the Reserves or National Guard.

**OR** up to 26 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a spouse, child, parent or next of kin (nearest blood relative) who has suffered a serious illness or injury while on active duty that renders the member medically unfit to perform their duties.

In the instance of birth, adoption and foster placement, the entitlement for child-care ends after the child reaches the age of one (1) year, or twelve (12) months after the adoption or placement.

Entitlement for leave associated with illness of a child occurs only where the child is under eighteen (18) years of age, or incapable of self-care due to mental or physical disability or on dependent student status.

The twelve (12) month period in which the twelve (12) workweeks of leave entitlement occurs is a "rolling" twelve (12) month period measured forward from the date an employee uses any leave granted by this policy.

### **Amount of Leave Available**

In cases where both spouses are employed by Griffin-Spalding County School System, the combined amount of leave for child birth, adoption, foster placement, or to care for a sick parent is limited to twelve (12) weeks. Leave may be taken on an intermittent or discontinuous basis as appropriate.

The unpaid medical and family leave provided under this policy runs concurrent with accumulated sick or personal leave the employee is eligible for under other policies of Griffin-Spalding County School System. Employees eligible under the military provisions of this policy are entitled to a combined total of up to 26 weeks of all types of FMLA leave during a 12 month period.

### **Notification of Anticipated Leave**

Except where circumstances are such that reasonable advance planning is not possible, employees must provide the Superintendent or a designee with at least thirty (30) days notice of the date when leave is to begin. With respect to foreseeable family or employee illness, the employee shall make reasonable effort to schedule treatment - including intermittent leave - so as not to disrupt unduly the operations of the school district, subject to approval of the employee's or family member's health care provider. Intermittent leave is not available to employees on leave due to the birth, adoption or foster placement of a child.

### **Benefits**

Benefits accrued by the employee before leave is taken will not be altered by the employee's absence under this policy. The employee is entitled to continuation of health benefits during the leave period. Upon return, the employee is entitled to restoration to an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and conditions of employment.

If an employee fails to return to work after the leave period has expired, the Board of Education may recover the health benefits premium expenditures extended to the employee during the leave period.

### **Required Medical Certification**

The Board of Education requires that a request for leave be supported by a certification issued by the appropriate health care provider of the eligible employee or of the son, daughter, spouse, or parent of the employee.

The certification shall include

1. The date that the condition commenced;
2. The duration;
3. The necessity for the employee's leave; and
4. If applicable, the employee's inability to perform job functions.

The Board of Education reserves the right, at its own expense, to designate a second health care provider (other than a school district employee) to provide a second opinion. A third such opinion, should it be necessary, shall be binding.

When applicable, upon the employee's return to work, the school district may require the employee to provide certification by his/her health care provider that the employee is able to resume work and perform the essential functions of the job.

## **Required Military Caregiver Certification**

1. The Board of Education may require documentation to confirm the covered family relationship to a seriously injured or ill military member.
2. Sufficient certification includes:
  - \* Invitational Travel Order (ITO) or
  - \* Invitational Travel Authorization (ITA) issued to relative to join injured or ill at bedside.

## **Definition of a Qualifying Exigency**

Leave is available to eligible employees with a covered military member serving in the National Guard or Reserves who is on active duty or called to active duty status for the following: (1) short notice deployment; (2) military events and related activities; (3) childcare and school activities; (4) financial and legal arrangements; (5) counseling; (6) rest and recuperation (up to 5 days); (7) post deployment activities; (8) additional activities where employer and employee agree on qualifications and timing.

## **Required Exigency Leave Certification**

The Board of Education requires that complete and sufficient certification to support exigency leave be submitted. This information includes:

- \* appropriate facts
- \* dates and time estimates
- \* contact information to support the request.

The Board of Education reserves the right, at its own expense, to designate a second health care provider (other than a school district employee) to provide a second opinion. A third such opinion, should it be necessary, shall be binding.

When applicable, upon the employee's return to work, the school district may require the employee to provide certification by his/her health care provider that the employee is able to resume work and perform the essential functions of the job. (Family & Medical Leave Act, Public Law 103-3) (GSCSS Policy GBRIG)

## **Military Leave**

Full-time employees of the school system shall be entitled to military leave for ordered military duty with full employment and reinstatement rights as provided by law. An employee shall be allowed a leave of absence from his or her duties while performing ordered military duty.

### A. Definition

The term "ordered military duty" shall mean the following:

Any military duty performed in the service of the State or of the United States including but not limited to attendance at any service school or schools conducted by the armed forces of the United States by an employee as a voluntary member of any force of the organized militia or any reserve force or reserve component of the armed forces of the United States pursuant to orders issued by the competent State or Federal authority without the consent of the employee.

Such duty, performed for a period or periods not exceeding a total of thirty (30) days in any one calendar year, shall be deemed "ordered military duty" regardless of whether such orders are or may be issued with the consent of the employee.

### B. Compensation

An employee shall be paid his or her salary or other compensation for a period or periods of an absence while engaged in the performance of ordered military duty and while going to and returning from such duty, not exceeding a total of eighteen (18) days in any one federal fiscal year.

### C. State Emergency

In the event the Governor declares an emergency and orders an employee to active duty as a member of the National Guard, such employee shall be paid his or her salary or other compensation while performing such duty for a period not exceeding thirty (30) days in any one federal fiscal year.

### D. Reporting to Employer

The employee subject to such military duty must provide the Human Resources Department with a copy of the official military orders along with the request for such leave. (GBOE Rule GBRID, 160-5-1-.04) (O.C.G.A., 38-2-279)

## **Leave for Personal or Professional Reasons (Daily)**

During any school year, the principal or immediate supervisor may approve for an employee a maximum of three days of any accumulated sick leave for such **personal** reasons as: (1) legal matters, (2) family situations not covered under sick leave, (3) religious holidays, and (4) personal business matters which cannot be scheduled at a time that does not conflict with the regular work schedule.

Note: Activities related to the pursuit of an advanced degree will be considered personal. Exceptions may be individuals employed in leadership positions holding non-renewable leadership certification who are completing certification requirements under the "new" leadership program beginning in 2009 which requires on-the-job training.

Within a school year certain days are considered essential for effective school operation. These days include pre-planning, the last two weeks of the school year, the days immediately preceding and following holidays, Staff Development Days, Teacher Work Days, post-planning, during standardized test administration and critical days as determined by the Principal or Superintendent. Requests for personal and professional leave on these days must be approved by the principal or immediate supervisor and then forwarded to the superintendent. The request should be on the "Application for Personal/Professional Leave" with a letter of explanation attached. It is not necessary to indicate specific reasons for personal leave on other work days.

Employees must request personal or professional leave in writing and, except in emergency situations, this leave should be requested in advance.

If the request is for **professional leave**, a copy of the letter of invitation or agenda of the meeting, workshop or conference must be attached to the "Application for Personal/Professional Leave." For absences on professional matters that are initiated by the school system, there will be no deduction from accumulated leave or pay when the absences are not personal in nature.

The following guidelines should be used for applying for professional leave.

A. Employees must apply in advance for professional leave for all out-of-system trips.

B. Leave applications must be made at least ten days prior to the beginning of the leave request.

C. Employees who require substitutes **MUST** apply in advance for professional leave even if the professional activity is within the system. If the activity is coordinated by a system-level person, that person may submit a list of names of participants and source of funds thereby eliminating the need for individual forms to be completed at the school level. Principals must check with the system-level person to determine how the leave request will be handled. All absences for professional reasons must be entered into the computerized absence reporting system (AESOP) regardless of whether it is in-system, out-of-system, requires a substitute or does not require a substitute. Administrators' leave must also be entered in AESOP. The only exceptions are in-system activities during pre-planning, post-planning and teacher in-service days. (GBOE Rule GBRI, 160-5-1-.01) (O.C.G.A., 20-2-850) (GSCSS Policy GARH)

## **Professional Study Leave (Annual)**

Employees may request leave for professional study lasting for one school year. Requests shall be made in writing to the superintendent. Professional study leave will be granted to not more than three people per year, depending on the availability of personnel to fill these positions. No two teachers shall be on simultaneous leave from the same department within a school. If a program of study is of two years duration, consideration may be given for this period of time.

Teachers receiving leave for professional study will be required to sign a contract to return to this school system for the following year. According to State Law, if such a contract is broken, certification may be lifted. Employees returning to the school system from professional study leave retain all accumulated sick leave. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-1110) (GSCSS Policy GARH)

## **Professional Leave - Creditable Service - TRS**

A member of the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia who undertakes full-time graduate study designed to advance or improve his training or abilities as a teacher is entitled to receive creditable service by the Teachers Retirement System for the period of graduate study under the following conditions:

- A. The member must have been a full-time teacher in the public schools of the State of Georgia or in the University System of Georgia under the Board of Regents immediately (not more than six months) prior to the period of full-time graduate study.
- B. The member must submit a transcript or similar document to the Teachers Retirement System as verification of the full-time period of graduate study.
- C. The member must return to full-time employment as a teacher in the public schools of Georgia or in the University System of Georgia for a minimum of five years following the period of graduate study.
- D. The member must pay the appropriate member contributions plus applicable accrued interest on the basis of the salary the member was receiving for full-time employment as a teacher immediately prior to the period of graduate study.

## **Religious Leave**

Employees may use their 3 allotted personal leave days (these days are not additional to the regular allotment) for any religious holidays which are not school holidays. Requests for religious leave must be made in advance and must be approved by the employee's principal or immediate supervisor. (GBOE Rule GBRI, 160-5-1-.04) (GSCSS Policy GARH)

## **Sick Leave**

The Griffin-Spalding County School System grants sick leave to all professional personnel in accordance with the policies set by the State Board of Education. Each person is entitled to 1 1/4 days per month for each completed contract month.

First year personnel will be given 1 1/4 days per month. When an employee needs to use sick leave before it is earned, advance leave will be automatically provided. This advancement cannot exceed the number of days which can be earned in one fiscal year. Each year, thereafter, 1 1/4 days per month are to be added to the unused leave from the previous year. This will be done until the person accumulates 120 days of sick leave.

When accumulated sick leave has been depleted, the equivalent of one day's salary (eg. 1/190 of the total salary) will be deducted for each additional day. In the event of separation from service before the end of the contract year, the board of education will deduct from the employee's regular salary due at the rate of 1/190 per day to recover the sick leave not earned by the employee.

Sick leave is granted only in case of illness or death in the immediate family of the employee. Besides the employee himself, immediate family includes spouse, parent, children, sibling, grandparents, grandparents-in-law, parents-in-law, siblings-in-law, grandchild, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, step-parents, any relative living in the residence of the employee or for any individual for whom you have medical power of attorney.

An employee may donate up to ten (10) days of sick leave to his or her spouse if such spouse is also an employee of Griffin-Spalding County Schools for purposes of maternity leave, illness, illness of an immediate family member, or death of a family member.

After three consecutive days of absence, or where extenuating circumstances deem it necessary, a doctor's statement may be required.

In accordance with the 1978 law on sick leave, teachers may transfer up to 45 days of sick leave earned from system to system within Georgia when and if they change jobs.

Sick leave records are maintained Human Resources and are updated monthly to reflect sick leave accumulated by teachers.

(GBOE Rule GBRI, 160-5-1-.04) (O.C.G.A. 20-2-850; 20-2-182(g); 21-2-404; 20-2-1110; 34-1-3; 45-20-30) (GSCSS Policy GARH)

## **Temporary Relief From Duty With Pay**

The superintendent may temporarily relieve from duty, pending a hearing by the board, any teacher or other school employee for any of the following reasons: (1) incompetency; (2) insubordination; (3) willful neglect of duties; (4) immorality; (5) inciting, encouraging, or counseling students to violate any valid state law, municipal ordinance, or policy or rule of the local board of education; (6) to reduce staff due to loss of students or cancellation of programs; (7) failure to secure and maintain necessary educational training; or (8) any other good and sufficient cause.

Temporary relief from duty may occur in those cases where the charges are of such seriousness or there are existing circumstances which indicate the teacher's or employee's continued performance of his/her duties pending the hearing present a danger of disruption or other serious harm to: (1) the school, (2) the school's mission, (3) the students, or (4) the staff. In any such case, the superintendent shall notify the teacher or employee in writing of such action which notice shall state the grounds thereof.

Such action by the superintendent shall not extend for a period in excess of ten working days and during that period it shall be the duty of the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education to conduct a hearing on charges. During the period that the teacher or other employee is relieved from duty prior to the decision of the board, the teacher or employee shall be paid all sums to which he/she is otherwise entitled.

Should the board hearing be delayed at the request of the teacher or employee beyond the mandated ten-day period, then the charged teacher or employee will not be paid beyond the mandated ten-day period unless reinstated by the board. In the event the board reinstates the teacher or employee, the teacher or employee will receive all compensation to which otherwise entitled exclusive of days for which a delay was specifically requested by the teacher or employee. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-940 (G))

## **Temporary Relief From Duty Without Pay**

In exercising its powers in the enforcement of due process, the board is authorized by State law to suspend a teacher or other school employee without pay for a period of time not to exceed 60 days. In such event, the teacher or employee shall provide no services for the school system and shall receive no compensation but shall be considered an employee on suspended status. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-943(a)(1)(B))

## **Unauthorized Absence**

Unauthorized absence shall cause an employee to be subject to dismissal with the termination of all employment benefits or to have that absence posted as leave without pay.

Unauthorized absence is defined as follows:

- A. An absence for any reason which is not permissible under the Georgia Code or policies of the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education, or
- B. An absence which occurs without the principal or principal's designee receiving ample advance notice regarding the absence. This absence may result in no substitute teacher being available for students scheduled for classes.

# **APPEALS**

## **Complaint Resolution Procedures**

Certified personnel shall have the right to present and resolve complaints relating to certain matters affecting the employment relationship at the lowest organizational level possible.

The board of education encourages all employees to resolve their complaints informally in a spirit of congeniality where possible. This policy and procedure is available where such efforts do not succeed or, where for any other reason, the certificated employee desires to pursue this procedure.

### **A. Definitions**

- 1. "Administrator" means the individual at each level designated by the local unit of administration to preside over and make decisions with respect to complaints.

2. "Central office administrator" means the local school system superintendent or the director of a Regional Education Service Agency (RESA).
3. "Complaint" means any claim by a certified employee of any local unit of administration who is affected in his or her employment relationship by an alleged violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of statutes, policies, rules, regulations, or written agreements of the local unit of administration with which the local unit of administration is required to comply.
4. "Local unit of administration" means the local board of education or the local board of control of a RESA.

#### B. Right to Make Complaint

Any certified employee who is affected in the employment relationship by an alleged violation or misapplication of statutes, policies, rules or regulations governing the school system shall have the right to pursue a complaint. However, the complaint procedure shall not extend to the following:

1. The termination, non-renewal, demotion, suspension or reprimand of the employee as set forth in the Fair Dismissal Law.
2. Personnel evaluations and professional development plans pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-210 and job performance.
3. The revocation, suspension or denial of certificates of any employee as set forth in O.C.G.A. 20-2-790 et seq.
4. Complaints with respect to the employment contract. A certified employee who chooses to appeal under Code Section 20-2-1160 shall be barred from pursuing the same complaint under this policy.

#### C. General Provisions Applying to All Levels

1. Accurate records of the proceeding at each level shall be kept by means of mechanical recordings preserving all evidence. These recordings shall be made available at all times to the parties involved.
2. The complainant cannot present additional evidence at each succeeding level of the complaint process unless it is submitted in writing by the Complainant five days prior to a hearing date for the Level II and Level III hearing.
3. The board of the local unit of administration, when hearing an appeal from a prior complaint level, shall hear the complaint *de novo*.
4. Any complaint not processed by the administrator or local unit of administration within the prescribed time frames shall be forwarded to the next level.
5. The administrator shall give notice to the complainant of the time and place of the hearing either by certified mail or by being hand-delivered by a person designated by the superintendent. When notice is given by mail, it shall be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested to the address set forth in the complaint. If no address was included in the complaint, then the notice shall be sent to the last known address of the complainant on file with the board of education. Where service or notice is made by certified mail as provided above, it shall be deemed to have been perfected when timely deposited in the mail, regardless of whether it was actually received or not.

#### D. First Level (Presentation and Contents)

The complaint shall be presented in writing to the Level I administrator within ten (10) calendar days from the most recent incident upon which the complaint is based. The complaint shall clearly state the intent of the employee to access the complaint policy. The complaint shall include the following:

1. The mailing address of the complainant to which notices and all other documents may be mailed
2. The intent of the complainant to utilize this complaint procedure
3. A reference or description of the statute, policy, rule or regulation that is alleged to have been violated or misapplied
4. A brief statement of the facts reasonably calculated to show how such statute, policy, rule or regulation was violated or misapplied, and how it substantially affects the employment relationship of the complainant

5. A statement of the relief desired.

E. First Level (Filing, Hearing, Decision)

The Level I administrator shall stamp the date of filing on the complaint. The administrator shall give notice to the complainant of the time and place of the hearing, either by certified mail or by being hand-delivered.

The complainant shall be afforded an opportunity at the hearing to be heard, to present relevant evidence, and to examine witnesses giving testimony where practicable. The presence of any individual other than the complainant and the administrator at this level is strictly prohibited. The Level I administrator shall make and retain accurate minutes of all matters considered and shall preserve all evidence presented, all of which shall be available to the parties involved.

The decision shall be made on the complaint within ten (10) calendar days of the complainant's filing. A copy of the decision shall be given to the complainant in the same manner provided above. The decision shall be dated, shall contain findings of the facts and reasons for the decision reached.

Note: For certificated personnel such as principals and central office personnel, the Level I administrator is the superintendent. Where the initial presentation is to the superintendent as the first level, any appeal shall be taken directly to the board of education in the manner provided in Section F hereof.

F. Second Level (Appeal from Level I to Level II Administrator)

A complainant dissatisfied with the decision from the first level shall be entitled to appeal to the Level II administrator or designee, by filing written notice of appeal with the office of the superintendent within ten (10) calendar days after the date of the decision from Level I. The Level II administrator shall stamp the date of the filing on the appeal and shall notify the complainant in writing of the time and place of the hearing.

The Level II administrator shall obtain copies of all minutes, documents and other records relating to the Complaint and shall conduct a hearing and render a decision within ten (10) calendar days of the date of the filing of the appeal.

The hearing may be conducted by any designated representative of the Level II administrator. The complainant is entitled to the presence of an individual of choice to assist in the presentation of the complaint.

If a designated representative of the Level II administrator conducts the hearing, he/she shall promptly submit his/her recommendations and finding to the Level II administrator for final decision. The decision shall be made in writing and dated, shall contain findings of facts and reasons for the decision. The decision shall be sent by certified mail or hand-delivered to the complainant.

G. Third Level (Appeal to the Board of Education)

A complainant or Level I administrator dissatisfied with the decision of the Level II administrator may appeal to the board of education by filing written notice of appeal with the office of superintendent. The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the date of the Level II decision. The appeal shall be heard and determined by the board within ten (10) calendar days after filing.

The complainant and administrators shall be entitled to appear before the board of education, or any hearing officer designated by it, and be heard.

The board of education may direct that a pre-hearing conference be held prior to the hearing to identify issues and facilitate presentation.

Notice of the time and place of the hearing/pre-hearing shall be given in the same manner as provided in Section E above.

The proceedings before the board of education or its designated representatives shall be recorded, dated, and preserved. The minutes shall be made available to the parties involved. If either party desires a transcription of the proceedings, the party shall have it prepared at the party's cost.

H. Overall Time Limit for Resolution of Complaint

All complaints and the appeals thereon before the board of education shall be finally decided within sixty (60) calendar days from the date of filing.

Nothing herein shall be construed to permit, foster or authorize collective bargaining by or on behalf of any employee or group of employees.

I. De Novo Determination (New Evidence)

A determination of a complaint made at the lower level shall be considered on appeal, but the complaint, nevertheless, shall be determined by the rendition of a decision thereon which the superintendent or local board (as the case may be) would have rendered had the matter been presented to that level at the outset; provided, however, the complainant cannot present additional evidence at any level after the first level, unless:

1. It is determined by the administrator presiding over the complaint that such evidence is relevant to the issues presented at the initial hearing and such evidence was either not made available by the administration or not discoverable by the complainant, or
2. Where the local board notifies the complainant at least five (5) calendar days prior to the hearing that it will hear the new evidence.

J. Exhaustion of Remedies (Duplicate Review Prohibited)

A certificated employee shall exhaust the procedures and remedies of this policy with respect to all complaints coming within the scope of Section B, above, except:

1. Where the Constitution of the United States supports the right of the employee to present the complaint directly to the board of education under O.C.G.A. 20-2-1160. Example: Where the complaint relates to a matter of general public interest as distinguished from one which is primarily of private or personal interest to the complainant only.
2. Where the law of Georgia supports the right of the employee to go directly to the board of education under O.C.G.A. 20-2-1160.
3. Where other good cause supports the right of the employee to present the complaint directly to the board of education. Example: Where the complaint challenges the validity on its face (rather than as applied) of a policy of the local or state board of education.

K. Costs

All costs and fees shall be borne by the party incurring them unless otherwise agreed upon by the parties involved except that the cost of preparing and preserving the record of the proceedings shall be borne by the local board of education.

L. Appeals to the State Board of Education

Appeals from the decision of the board of education to the state board of education shall be governed by State Board Policy BCAEA (Appeals Hearings) and O.C.G.A. 20-2-1160.

M. Reprisal

A complainant shall not be subjected to any reprisal as a result of filing a complaint under this policy. Should any reprisal occur, the complainant may refer the matter to the Educator Ethics Division of the GAPSC.

(GBOE Rule GAE, 160-1-3-.01) (O.C.G.A., 20-2-1160; 20-2-210; 20-2-790; 20-2-940 et seq.) (GSCSS Policy GAE)

### **Equal Opportunity Complaint Procedure**

Complaints made to the board of education regarding alleged discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in violation of Title VI, on the basis of sex in violation of Title IX, or on the basis of disability in violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, will be processed in accordance with the following procedure:

- A. Any employee or other person with a complaint alleging a violation as described above shall promptly notify, in writing or orally, the appropriate coordinator designated below for the school system. If the complaint is oral, the coordinator shall promptly prepare a memo or written statement of the complaint as made by the complainant and shall have the complainant read and sign the memo or statement if it accurately reflects the complaint made.

- B. The coordinator shall have fifteen days to gather all information relevant to the complaint made, review the information, determine the facts relating to the complaint, review the action requested by the complainant, and attempt to resolve the complaint with the complainant and any other persons involved. The coordinator shall prepare a written response to the complaint detailing any action to be taken in response to the complaint and the time frame in which such action will be taken and copies of this response shall be furnished to the complainant and the superintendent.
- C. If the complaint is not resolved at the conclusion of this fifteen day period or if the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint, the complainant shall have the right, within five days of receiving a copy of the written response, to have the complaint referred to the superintendent.
- D. The superintendent shall have fifteen days to review the complaint and the response of the coordinator and attempt to resolve the complaint. The superintendent shall furnish to the complainant a written response setting forth either his approval of the action recommended by the coordinator or the action to be taken by the system in response to the complaint or a new decision in lieu of that recommended by the coordinator and the time frame in which such action shall be taken.
- E. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response of the superintendent, then the complainant shall have the right, within fifteen (15) days of receipt of the written response of the superintendent, to have the complaint referred to the board of education. In order to have the board of education review the superintendent's decision, the complainant must file with the superintendent a written statement setting forth the reasons he or she disagrees with the response of the superintendent and the action the complainant is requesting the system to take. The complainant shall also include in the written response a request that the complaint be referred to the board of education.
- F. Within thirty days of receipt of the written request of the complainant, the superintendent shall present the matter to the board of education at its regular meeting or at a special meeting called for that purpose. The board shall review the original complaint, the response of the coordinator, the response of the superintendent, and the response of the complainant. In addition, the board may but is not required to, hear directly from any individuals with knowledge of any relevant facts relating to the complaint.
- G. The board of education will either uphold the recommendation of the superintendent or require the system to take some other action in response to the complaint. A copy of the action of the board will be furnished to the complainant, either as a part of the minutes of the board of education or as a separate written statement. The board shall be the final reviewing authority within the system.

This procedure is not intended to deprive any employee of any right they may have to file a grievance pursuant to any other policy of the board of education, specifically including policy GAE, where appropriate. This procedure is not intended to provide an alternative process for resolving evaluation and employment disputes where there already exists a due process procedure mandated by state law or state department of education regulations, specifically including, but not limited to, hearings to be conducted pursuant to the Fair Dismissal Act of Georgia, Official Code of Georgia Annotated 20-2-940 through 947. The complainant retains at all times the right to contact the Office of Civil Rights with regard to any allegations that the system has violated the statutes described above.

Perkins Act: Vocational Director  
 Title IX Coordinator: Human Resources Director  
 Section 504 Coordinator: Special Education Director  
 Title VI Coordinator: Special Education Director  
 ADA Coordinator: Human Resources Director

(Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 503 and 504; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; 45 CFR Part 84; Americans with Disabilities Act; Executive Order, 11246, as amended. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-211(d); 30-1-10 et seq.; 34-1-2; 34-6A-1 et seq.; 36-6A-1 et seq.; 45-19-20 et seq.) (GSCSS Policy JAA-R/GAAA-R)

### **Nonrenewal of Contract (non-tenure status)**

When the superintendent proposes not to renew the contract of any teacher or other professional employee certified by the Professional Standards Commission who was on the payroll and under contract on the beginning day of the current school year, written notification of such intention shall be given to the teacher or other certified professional employee by no later than April 15 prior to the ensuing school year. When such notice is not given, the employment of the teacher or employee shall be continued for the ensuing school year unless the teacher or employee has been removed in accordance with provisions of the Georgia Code. The superintendent is the final authority and there is no right to appeal under the provisions of this section. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-211)

## **Nonrenewal of Contract or Demotion (tenure status)**

In order to demote or fail to renew the contract of a teacher who has gained tenure status in the current school system, the teacher must be given written notice of the intention to demote or not renew the contract of the teacher. Such notice shall be given by certified mail or statutory overnight delivery.

A teacher who is so notified that he or she is to be demoted or that his or her contract will not be renewed has the right to the procedures set forth in subsections (b) through (f) of Code Section 20-2-940 before the intended action is taken. A teacher who has the right to these procedures must serve written notice on the superintendent of the local board employing the teacher within 20 days of the day the notice of the intended action is served that he or she requests a hearing. In order to be effective, such written notice that the teacher requests implementation of such procedures must be served by certified mail. Within 14 days of service of the request to implement the procedures, the local board must furnish the teacher a notice that complies with the requirements of subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-940. O.C.G.A. 20-2-942(b)(2).

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

The Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education forbids discrimination against any employee or applicant for employment on the basis of sex. The board of education will not tolerate sexual harassment activity by any of its employees. This policy similarly applies to non-employee volunteers who work subject to the control of school authorities.

### **A. General Prohibitions**

#### **1. Unwelcome Conduct of a Sexual Nature**

- (a) Conduct of a sexual nature may include verbal or physical sexual advances, including subtle pressure for sexual activity; touching, pinching, patting, or brushing against; comments regarding physical or personality characteristics of a sexual nature; and sexually-oriented "kidding," teasing," double-entendres, and jokes.
- (b) Verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature may constitute sexual harassment when the allegedly harassed employee has indicated, by his/her conduct, that it is unwelcome.
- (c) An employee who has initially welcomed such conduct by active participation must give specific notice to the alleged harasser that such conduct is no longer welcome in order for any such subsequent conduct to be deemed unwelcome.

#### **2. Sexual Harassment**

For the purposes of this policy, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment if:

- (a) submission to the conduct is made either an explicit or implicit condition of employment;
- (b) submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for an employment decision affecting the harassed employee; or
- (c) the conduct substantially interferes with an employee's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

### **B. Specific Prohibitions**

#### **1. Administrators and Supervisors**

- (a) It is sexual harassment for an administrator or supervisor to use his/her authority to solicit sexual favors or attention from subordinates when the subordinate's failure to submit will result in adverse treatment, or when the subordinate's acquiescence will result in preferential treatment.
- (b) Administrators and supervisors who either engage in sexual harassment or tolerate such conduct by other employees shall be subject to sanctions, as described below.

## 2. Non-administrative and Non-supervisory Employees

- (a) It is sexual harassment for a non-administrative and non-supervisory employee to subject another such employee to any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. Employees who engage in such conduct shall be subject to sanctions as described below.

## C. Reporting, Investigation, and Sanctions

1. It is the express policy of the board of education to encourage victims of a sexual harassment to come forward with such claims. This may be done through the grievance procedure, policy GAE.
  - (a) Employees who feel that administrators or supervisors are conditioning promotions, increases in wages, continuation of employment, or other terms or conditions of employment upon sexual favors, are encouraged to report these conditions to the appropriate administrator. If the employee's direct administrator or supervisor is the offending person, the report shall be made to the next higher level of administration or supervision.
  - (b) Employees are also urged to report any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature by supervisors or fellow employees if such conduct interferes with the individual's work performance or creates a hostile or offensive working environment.
  - (c) Confidentiality will be maintained and no reprisals or retaliation will be allowed to occur as a result of the good faith reporting of charges of sexual harassment.
2. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment, the totality of the circumstances, the nature of the conduct and the context in which the alleged conduct occurred will be investigated. The superintendent or his designee has the responsibility of investigating and resolving complaints of sexual harassment.
3. Any employee found to have engaged in sexual harassment shall be subject to sanctions, including, but not limited to, warning, suspension, or termination subject to applicable procedural requirements. (GSCSS Policy GAEB)

### **Termination of Contract (Grounds for Termination, Suspension or Demotion)**

The employment of a teacher, principal or other employee having a contract for a definite term may be terminated or suspended for the following reasons:

- A. Incompetence
- B. Insubordination
- C. Failure to obtain and/or maintain required certification
- D. Willful neglect of duties
- E. Immorality
- F. Inciting, encouraging or counseling students to violate any valid state law, municipal ordinance, or policy or rule of the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education
- G. Reduction in staff due to loss of students or cancellation of programs
- H. Failure to secure and maintain necessary educational training
- I. Any other good and sufficient cause

Termination of contract, temporary relief from duty or demotion during a contract year are subject to appeal to the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education in accordance with the Georgia Code. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-211(b); 20-2-940 et seq; 20-2-1160)

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Assignment - General**

The basic consideration in the assignment of professional personnel will be the needs of students and the instructional program. Assignments will be considered in light of projected student enrollments, a balanced staff and availability of positions for various certification areas.

Personnel will be assigned on the basis of their qualifications, the needs of the district (including a balanced staff) and their expressed desires. When it is not possible to meet all of these conditions, an employee will be assigned first in accordance with district needs and where the administration feels the employee is most qualified to serve, and second, according to the preference of the employee.

A personnel assignment is defined as the location/responsibilities given to a professional employee for a contract period.

A transfer is defined as a change in assignment requested by the professional employee.

A reassignment is defined as an administrative change of assignment that affects 50% or more of a professional employee's assignment and/or results in a change of the individual employee's primary evaluator.

Seniority is determined by the length of continuous full-time instructional service with the Griffin-Spalding County School System. Continuous service will not be considered interrupted when approved leaves are taken.

Displaced position is defined as a position that no longer exists as a result of reorganization within school/system.

The Superintendent must recommend for Board approval transfers from school to school or to a new type of position, and reassignments of any type.

Within individual schools or programs, principals or program coordinators will have the exclusive right to assign classes and courses in accordance with certification requirements and school Board policy. They will also recommend to the Superintendent assignments to extra-pay positions in their schools or programs.

### **Conflict of Interest**

As stipulated in teacher contracts, teachers are assigned to duty at specific schools but the board of education reserves the right to effect a transfer at any time to any school under its jurisdiction.

No employee shall be assigned to any position in a supervisor/subordinate relationship with an immediate family member.

For purposes of this policy, the immediate family is defined as spouse, child, mother, father, brother or sister.

When an administrator/immediate family relationship is established after employment or promotion, a transfer will be effected at a subsequent date convenient to the school system but no later than the beginning of the next school term.

Personnel employed in positions in the Griffin-Spalding County School System prior to September, 1993, who are under the direct administrative or supervisory authority of a member of the employee's immediate family are exempt from the provisions of this policy.

The board may waive these restrictions when the assignment or placement of immediate family members is deemed to be in the best interest of the school system or is of such a nature that no reasonable alternatives are available. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-211) (GSCSS Policy GAG)

### **Reassignment (Voluntary and Involuntary)**

#### **A. Procedures**

When it becomes necessary to reassign a staff member due to changes in enrollment, programs, curriculum, state and local regulations, or for other reasons, school and district leadership will:

1. Assess the system need and develop a plan for correcting the situation.
2. Determine the school(s), grade(s), program(s) or department(s) affected by the corrective plan and identify the employee or group of employees who may be affected.

Voluntary reassignment is desirable. Voluntary reassignment is one which involves mutual acceptance of the employee and the receiving principal and/or program coordinator. If more than one employee holding the appropriate certification has been identified as potentially affected then school and/or district leadership will:

1. Determine if there are any present staff member(s) interested in the proposed reassignment.
2. If there are multiple volunteers, then the one with the most seniority will be given first consideration. If certification and acceptance by the receiving principal or program coordinator is in order; the reassignment of that individual will be made. If all conditions are not met for the most senior volunteer, leadership will consider all other volunteers in order of seniority.

If no present staff members in the identified group volunteer for reassignment then an involuntary reassignment will be pursued as follows.

1. The identified group of employees will be ranked according to seniority.
2. The least senior employee will be the first considered for involuntary reassignment. If a review of all factors affecting reassignment is satisfactory for this individual, the involuntary reassignment of that individual will be made.

### **Factors Affecting Reassignment**

All of the following factors, in addition to seniority, will be considered for reassignment:

1. Staff diversity within the school
2. Special talents and/or expertise deemed to be essential.
3. Training and experience of staff.

### **Notification of Reassignment**

Staff members will be notified of the reassignment and the effective date of the change, both verbally and in writing, at least 3 days prior to the effective date, but sooner if at all possible. This will allow for appropriate notification of parents and relocation of classroom/teacher materials, etc.

### **Reassignment After Leave of Absence**

Staff members who return from an approved leave of absence, not to exceed one year, will be entitled to return to active employment upon written request for reassignment and contingent on a vacancy for which the teacher is qualified. Teachers granted such leave shall be given preference to other applicants for a vacancy for which they are qualified; however, reassignment to a teaching position may be delayed until the beginning of a quarter or other grading period in order to maintain continuity of classroom instruction. (O.C.G.A., 20-2-211(a) (GSCSS Policy GBE)

### **Transfers**

A transfer may be requested by any professional employee and will be given due consideration in accordance with the provisions of this policy. Acceptance of transfers is left to the discretion of the receiving principal or program coordinator and approval by the Superintendent. The system reserves the right to establish annually a deadline date for transfers requested by employees and to monitor transfers in order to maintain a balanced staff.

### **Assignment of Professional Staff When Opening New School**

The primary consideration in the assignment of professional personnel to new schools will be the needs of the students, the needs of the instructional program, and the necessity of providing a balanced staff. Every attempt will be made to accommodate the wishes of staff members however, involuntary reassignments may be warranted. When a new school is opening in the system, professional assignment will be made by district/school leadership as follows:

1. Allotments of professional staff for schools/programs/departments involved in the reorganization will be determined.
2. Based on these allotments, the number of displaced positions will be determined (at the high school level, these numbers are done by departments).
3. Personnel affected by displacement will be determined. Voluntary assignments of displaced personnel will be made whenever possible; however involuntary reassignments may be necessary in order to meet student needs, system needs, and to comply with state and federal guidelines. All displaced personnel will be assigned before any outside applicants are considered for employment.
4. If all displaced personnel have been assigned and additional positions exist, transfer requests from throughout the system will be considered according to the provisions of this policy.
5. Any remaining positions would be filled with outside applicants.

## Workload

Full-time employees are expected to work a minimum eight-hour day and a forty-hour week. Part-time employees work the number of hours daily and/or weekly as specified in their contract or initial employment agreement.

School principals will be responsible for the individual hours a school employee works. Principals have some discretion in the hours employees are at school and will work with employees on an individual basis to insure that schools are open and children supervised when they arrive and until the time they leave.

Duties for certified staff members may vary according to assignments, and include responsibilities such as teaching and preparation, staff meetings, conferences with students and parents, planning conferences, related school activities in the community and extra class responsibilities and completion of those duties may result in a work week in excess of 40 hours.

Distribution of work among staff members shall conform to the minimum requirements for accreditation, and classes shall be so arranged that each child will receive individual attention. (GBOE Rule AF, GBRC (160-5-1-.06) (O.C.G.A. 20-2-168(c)) (GSCSS Policy GBRC)

## Attendance Choices for Children of Employees

As stated in Griffin-Spalding County School Board Policy JBC, an employee may elect for his/her child(ren) to attend a Griffin-Spalding County School based on his/her residential address. Additionally, State Law provides that a student shall be allowed to be enrolled in and attend the school in which a parent or guardian of such student is a full-time employee, notwithstanding the fact that the student and his or her parent or guardian may reside in another county or attendance zone. When an employee elects for his/her child(ren) to attend the school where he/she is employed or attend a different grade level other than the campus where the employee is housed, the following options will apply:

<b>Employee works at:</b>	<b>Student may attend:</b>
Atkinson	Atkinson/CRMS/SHS
Anne Street	Anne Street/RRMS/GHS
Beaverbrook	Beaverbrook/CRMS/GHS
Cowan Road Elem.	Cowan Road Elem./CRMS/GHS
Crescent	Crescent/RRMS/SHS
Futral Road	Futral Road/RRMS/SHS
Jackson Road	Jackson Road/KRMS/SHS
Jordan Hill	Jordan Hill/KRMS/SHS
Moore	Moore/KRMS/SHS
Moreland Road	Moreland Road/CAMS/GHS
Orrs	Orrs/CAMS/GHS
Carver Road Middle School (CAMS)	Moreland Road/CAMS/GHS
Cowan Road Middle School (CRMS)	Cowan Road Elem./CRMS/GHS
Kennedy Road Middle School (KRMS)	Jackson Road/KRMS/SHS
Rehoboth Road Middle School (RRMS)	Futral Road/RRMS/SHS
Griffin High School (GHS)	Orrs/CAMS/GHS
Special Needs Pre-K Office	Orrs/CAMS/GHS
Spalding High School (SHS)	Futral Road/RRMS/SHS
Central Office	Crescent/RRMS/SHS
Transportation Department	Orrs/CAMS/GHS
Enrichment Center	Orrs/CAMS/GHS
A.Z. Kelsey Academy	Moore/KRMS/SHS
Mainstay	Moore/KRMS/SHS
Griffin-Spalding Alternative School	Atkinson/CRMS/GHS
Taylor Street Campus	Crescent/RRMS/SHS
Maintenance Department	Orrs/CAMS/GHS

If bus transportation is not already scheduled between the schools identified above, the employee must provide transportation for his/her child(ren) to and from school.

Any eligible employee's child, in fourth grade, seventh grade, and/or high school for the 2008-2009 school year will have the option of either continuing in the present school ("grandfathering") for the 2009-2010 school year or going to the appropriate school in the options listed above. Parents will be required to provide transportation. An employee's child is considered to be an eligible student if the student is enrolled during the 2008-2009 school year on a campus other than the option listed above.

If an employee has an unique situation regarding their child's attendance zone, the parent or guardian may request a review of the situation by the Transfer Request Committee. Refer to JBC-R(O) for Transfer Request Committee procedures.

## **Credit Union**

The FAA Southern Federal Credit Union was organized to help members and their families save money and to borrow money for worthwhile purposes. Any school employee or family member may join the credit union by the deposit of a minimum of \$25.00. The current dividend rate paid on shares is compounded quarterly. Certificates are usually available at higher rates of interest.

A credit union member may save through payroll deduction, by mail, or at the credit union offices. Deposits are insured up to \$100,000. Other services of the credit union include on-line banking, safe deposit boxes, drive-in-window, automated teller machine, travelers checks, VISA debit/credit cards, free notary public services, night depository, "money market" savings certificates, 30-year home mortgages, second mortgages, direct payroll deposit, "Share Draft" which is similar to the common checking account, a "Quick Cash" program for pre-approved instant loans, and car finder service.

## **Direct Deposit of Payroll**

Employees may have their payroll check deposited to their choice of any bank, provided the bank is a member of the Automated Clearing House (ACH). The deposit may be made to a checking account. The employee may end the arrangement at any time.

### **A. Eligibility**

All monthly employees are eligible for Direct Deposit of Payroll. For employees newly enrolled, direct deposit will take effect beginning with the second pay check.

### **B. When to Apply**

Application can be made at any time. Direct deposit of payroll will begin no later than 60 days following receipt of the properly executed authorization form.

### **C. How to Apply**

1. Complete the Direct Deposit of Payroll Application Form which can be obtained from the school/department secretary or in Finance.
2. Attach a voided check to the completed application form.
3. Return the completed form with the attached voided check to the Finance Department by the 10th of the month for which direct deposit is desired. If received after the deadline, direct deposit will not be effective until the following month.

### **D. Proof of Deposit**

Employees will receive a "Direct Deposit Voucher" showing their wages, taxes, and other deductions. The employee's bank statement will also show the date and the amount of the deposit.

### **E. Production Problems**

It is possible that production problems concerning power failure, inclement weather or technical operations may prevent the direct deposit of payroll. Should a rare production problem prevent a direct deposit, then a regular paycheck will be issued. Immediately upon receipt, each check stub should be reviewed for accuracy.

F. Notice to Discontinue or Change Direct Deposit

Any changes to direct deposit accounts require written notification, (i.e. closed bank account; transfer of account to new bank; same bank - new account; etc.) and must be received no later than the 10th of the month by the Finance Department.

G. Caution About Closing a Bank Account

Bank accounts should be closed only after a written notice to discontinue direct deposit has been received and processed by the Finance Department. When your checks are again being received without direct deposit, you can then close a bank account without concern about your funds being sent to the wrong place.

H. Questions

Questions about direct deposit of payroll should be directed to the Finance Department by calling 770-229-3700.

## **Holidays**

Each year holidays are identified when the official school calendar is adopted by the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education. Traditional holidays observed have been New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, President's Day, spring holidays, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and winter holidays. Additional days of no duty may be approved by the board in conjunction with the traditional holiday periods. The work calendar for each year is established by the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education.

## **Payroll Deductions**

Services are provided through payroll deductions for: (a) credit union, (b) Federal income tax, (c) direct deposit of payroll, (d) garnishments, (e) Georgia income tax, (f) insurance, (g) Medicare, (h) professional dues (GAE and PAGE), (i) retirement, (j) salary adjustments, (k) tax levies, (l) tax-sheltered annuities, and (m) United Way contributions.

## **Retirement**

All employees entitled by State law to participate in the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia are required to become members immediately upon employment. A five-percent deduction according to State law is made from salary each month as a contribution for retirement purposes. If an employee does not continue to work until retirement, the employee contributions may be withdrawn after the last payroll check has been rendered. (O.C.G.A. 47-3-60(a))

A teacher may retire with 30 or more years of creditable service regardless of age, or at age 60 with 10 or more years of creditable service.

TRS Facts, A Member's Guide to the Teacher Retirement System of Georgia is a handbook available from Human Resources or from the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia. Additional information, forms, and a pension calculator are available online at [www.trsga.com](http://www.trsga.com).

## **Unused Sick Leave Credit Toward Retirement (HB 203)**

In 1998 the Georgia General Assembly passed Act 859 which allows Teachers Retirement System (TRS) to grant service credit for accrued sick leave which a member has not used. Once an employee has made the decision to retire, arrangement for sick leave credit may be made through the Human Resources Office.

## **Sick Leave Bank**

### A. Overview

The purpose of the Griffin-Spalding County School System Sick Leave Bank is to provide its members experiencing catastrophic illnesses, with sick leave after their own sick leave has been exhausted. Employees who elect to become members of the Sick Leave Bank are required to contribute part of their accumulated sick leave to the Bank. Members may withdraw sick leave from the Bank only in accordance with the procedures established by the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education.

### B. Administration

1. The Griffin-Spalding County School System Sick Leave Bank is administered by a committee consisting of nine employees: a building level administrator; a central office administrator: an elementary teacher; a middle school teacher; a secondary teacher; one employee from the transportation and maintenance department; one employee from the nutrition services department; one employee who is a secretary, clerk or paraprofessional; one employee appointed as an at-large member. In addition, the Human Resources Director serves as an ex-officio member of the committee.
2. The committee has the responsibility for receiving, verifying and approving or denying requests for Sick Leave Bank withdrawals.
3. All records of the Sick Leave Bank shall be maintained by the Human Resources Department.
4. The Sick Leave Bank is subject to an annual review by the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education to determine effectiveness and cost. The board reserves the right to discontinue the Bank at any time.

### C. Membership

1. Any full-time employee with at least one full year of service, who is entitled to sick leave in the Griffin-Spalding County School System and has at least one day of accumulated leave may become a member of the Sick Leave Bank by donating one day of the employee's accumulated sick leave during an annual open enrollment period, beginning at preplanning and ending on Friday the third week of school.
2. Membership requests will be accepted only during the annual enrollment period.
3. New employees of the school system become eligible for membership following the first full year of their employment.
4. Membership in the Sick Leave Bank continues from year to year unless written notice of withdrawal of membership is received during the open enrollment period.
5. Each member must sign an authorization form stating that the member is aware of the provisions of the Griffin-Spalding County School System Sick Leave Bank and that the member relieves the Sick Leave Committee and the Griffin-Spalding County School System from any liability as a result of action taken by the committee.

### D. Donation of Sick Leave

1. Members of the Sick Leave Bank are reassessed one day per year to be added to the Bank on September 1st of each year.
2. The minimum "safe reserve balance of days" in the Bank on June 30 is considered to be one times the number of members. A balance below the safe reserve may justify an increase in the annual reassessment rate of one day (a total of two days). At no time shall the Bank have less than 120 days on deposit.
3. The "excess reserve balance of days" in the Bank on June 30, is considered two times the number of members. A balance greater than the excess reserve level may justify a reduction in the annual reassessment rate of one day.
4. If a member has not accumulated sick leave at the time of the assessment, the next earned sick leave day shall be donated.

5. Donations of sick leave to the Sick Leave Bank are not refundable or transferable.

#### E. Eligibility for Withdrawals

Members of the Sick Leave Bank are eligible to apply for withdrawals of sick leave from the Bank provided that:

1. The employee has been a member of the Sick Leave Bank for thirty (30) calendar days and the sick leave days in the application occur after this waiting period.
2. The member has been absent due to the employee's, employee's spouse or employee's children's illness, injury, surgery or other temporary disability that is catastrophic in nature (i.e., strokes, cancer, organ transplant, heart attack, trauma-accident where major bones are broken). The Bank shall not be used for maternity leave unless the mother experiences complications with pregnancy or delivery.
3. The member has been absent due to illness at least fifteen (15) working days prior to the day the use of the Sick Leave Bank begins.
4. The member has exhausted his/her own accumulated leave and vacation.
5. The member is not receiving Workers' Compensation or other remuneration for the absences provided in part or in full by the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education.

#### F. Applications for Withdrawal

1. Applications for withdrawals of days from the Sick Leave Bank should be submitted on the Sick Leave Bank Withdrawal Form in care of the Human Resources Department. The application must be accompanied by a physician's statement verifying the member's illness, injury, surgery or other temporary disability.
2. An applicant may be required to undergo, at the applicant's own expense, a medical review by a physician approved by the committee.
3. Withdrawals from the Bank will be granted in units of twenty (20) consecutive days when the employee would normally receive pay.
4. Members may submit requests for extensions of leave before their prior grant expires.
5. The maximum number of days any member may receive in any twelve-month period is sixty (60).
6. All leave granted, but not used by the member, must be returned to the Sick Leave Bank.
7. Sick leave granted and used by a member does not have to be repaid except as all members are uniformly reassessed.
8. If a member is physically or mentally unable to make a request to the Sick Leave Bank, a family member or agent may file the request on the member's behalf.

#### G. Processing Withdrawal Applications

1. Upon receipt of an application, the Sick Leave Bank Committee shall meet and render a decision within twenty (20) working days.
2. Decisions must reflect a two-thirds majority vote of five or more committee members voting. The decision shall be final and binding and not subject to appeal under Policy GAE: Professional Personnel Complaints and Grievances.
3. The committee will use the following criteria in administering the Bank and rendering its decisions:
  - a. medical evidence of illness, injury, surgery or disability;
  - b. accumulated vacation and sick leave used;
  - c. accumulation of sick leave in previous years;
  - d. length of service in Griffin-Spalding County School System; and
  - e. balance of unused sick leave days in the Bank.

## **Workers' Compensation**

All employees of the school system are covered by Workers' Compensation by a self-insured program administered by Covenant. It shall be the responsibility of the employee to report any work-related injury immediately to the principal or immediate supervisor. The employee may lose the right to receive compensation if an accident is not reported properly within the 30-day period following the accident.

It shall be the responsibility of the principal or director of the department to complete Georgia Form WC-1 Employer's First Report of Injury or Occupational Disease, on each work-related injury that occurs. This form, along with the supervisor's report, shall be forwarded to the Benefits Office immediately following the accident. Failure to submit this form will jeopardize settlement of the claim.

A worker injured on the job must select a doctor from the list of panel physicians posted in each system facility. One change of doctor, from the list, may be made without permission. Further changes require the permission of the employer or the State Board of Workers' Compensation.

Employees being treated under the Georgia Workers' Compensation Law must be treated by one of the approved panel of physicians or the medical bills will not be paid by the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education with the exceptions noted below.

An employee may accept the services of a physician from the panel. Due to an emergency or for some other justifiable reasons, the selection requirements of the paragraph shall not apply as long as the inability of the employee to make a selection persists. The physician selected under this subsection may arrange for any consultation, referral, extraordinary or other specialized medical services as the nature of the injury shall require. The Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education shall not be responsible for the charges for medical services furnished or ordered by a physician, including any person licensed to practice a healing art and any remedial treatment and care in the State of Georgia, or other person selected by the employee in disregard of the provisions of this section.

## **CERTIFICATION**

### **General Information**

The Professional Standards Commission (PSC) is vested with the power to establish necessary requirements and to issue certificates required of teachers employed in the State's public schools. Detailed information is available on the PSC website, [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com).

### **Applying for Certificates**

The Professional Standards Commission currently requires a single application form for all types of certificates. The forms are available in the Human Resources Office or can be downloaded from the PSC website – [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com). All applications for certification should be processed through the Human Resources Office in order to ensure that all portions are complete.

### **Expiring Certificates**

Certificates of current employees can **only** be renewed through the Human Resources Office. In the late fall of the year preceding the expiration date of the certificate, employees should receive a packet from the Human Resources Office indicating the procedures to be followed and the documentation required for submission.

All certified employees must submit to a Criminal Background Check at the time of certificate renewal. Those employees who were hired after July 1, 1994 and were fingerprinted by the Griffin-Spalding County School system at the time of hire will only submit to a GCIC check. Any individual who has not previously been fingerprinted will be scheduled to do so prior to the renewal being submitted. Fingerprinting is completed in the Human Resources Office and the employee assumes the cost of the criminal background submission.

Failure to maintain a valid in-field teaching certificate will result in immediate termination of employment. Each teacher should be aware of the certification status of all certificates held. **Maintaining a valid in-field certificate is the teacher's personal responsibility.**

Contact the Human Resources Department for assistance with any certification questions or issues which might arise.

## **New Certificates**

When the Professional Standards Commission issues a new certificate, the teacher's certificate is individually mailed to the address that was listed on the Certification Application. Note: After January 2010, certificates will no longer be mailed to teachers. Teachers will be expected to view their certificates online at [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com). The school system's copy is e-mailed to the system if it was listed on the application. Necessary salary changes or adjustments cannot be made until the school system has the certificate on file.

## **Newly-employed Teachers**

Georgia law requires that teachers in Georgia public schools have a certificate issued by the Professional Standards Commission. State funds are provided to local school systems based on the teaching certificate on file in the Human Resources office. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-200)

In view of the legal and financial requirements, a teacher must have an in-field teaching certificate on file in the Griffin-Spalding County School System's Human Resources Department. In the event a teaching certificate is not filed or applied for prior to the end of the second pay period, checks may be withheld. If an employee is experiencing problems obtaining information, an appointment must be scheduled with the Human Resources Director. During this conference, all steps for securing a certificate will be reviewed and assistance will be provided if needed. If it is determined at this conference that the teacher is not eligible for an appropriate Georgia teaching certificate, employment will be terminated immediately.

## **Certification Tests**

Beginning fall 2006, the testing program for certification in Georgia changed to the GACE Series. Teachers who have previously posted a passing score on the TCT or Praxis II in their field will not be required to complete the GACE. However, all teachers applying for initial certification or working toward conversion of conditional certificates are required to post a passing score on the GACE.

### **Who Must Take the Tests**

1. In-State Applicants - All candidates applying for a certificate are required to present passing scores on the appropriate content area test (TCT, Praxis or GACE). Individuals applying for initial certification must pass or exempt the three Basic Skills Tests (reading, math, writing).
2. Out-of-State Applicants - If you hold or have held a professional certificate in another state, and **have passed the appropriate content knowledge test required by that state** for that certification field, you may not be required to take the Georgia test for licensure and are exempt from the Basic Skills Tests.
3. If you hold or have held a professional certificate in another **state where a content knowledge test was not required**, you may be eligible for a nonrenewable certificate before passing the required Georgia test, but you are exempt from the Basic Skills Tests.

Any questions regarding the need for testing should be directed to the Human Resources Department.

### **Registration**

Online registration for a GACE exam is available at [www.gace.nesinc.com](http://www.gace.nesinc.com).

## **CONTRACTS**

### **Annual Contract**

A written contract is issued to each new teacher. In the spring, after the principal's recommendation is filed, a contract is made for each recommended teacher for the coming school year. A contract is made by and between the teacher and the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education for a teaching position within the system and not for a specific school. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-943(b))

Employment contracts of teachers, principals, and other certificated professional personnel must be in writing and must be signed in duplicate by such personnel on their own behalf and by the superintendent on behalf of the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-211)

Any laws to the contrary notwithstanding, the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education shall tender a new contract for the ensuing school year to every teacher on the payroll of the system at the beginning of the preceding school year, except teachers who have resigned or who have been terminated, by April 15 of each year or notify any such teacher that they will not be reemployed for the ensuing school year. The notification shall be in writing. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-211)

### **Appraisal of Performance**

Evaluation is an integral component in the process of improving teaching and learning. All professionally certified leadership personnel, teaching personnel and service personnel employed by the board must have their performance evaluated annually by appropriately trained evaluators.

The purposes of the annual performance evaluation are:

- A. to identify and reinforce effective teaching practices
- B. to identify areas where development can improve instructional effectiveness
- C. to identify teachers who do not meet the minimum standards so that the appropriate action can be taken

Teachers who are employed any portion of the year must, at a minimum, be evaluated with the Georgia Teacher Duties and Responsibilities Instrument. This applies to teachers employed fewer than 120 days or less than half time. A single evaluation for certified personnel who share duties among schools will be completed collectively by all supervisors.

A summary of the employee's formal appraisal will be prepared by the principal on a date designated by the superintendent. This summary appraisal will be placed with the Human Resources Department.

Professional employees who receive an unsatisfactory annual evaluation shall remain at his or her current step and will not receive salary credit for the year in which the unsatisfactory was received. Any teacher who receives 2 unsatisfactory annual evaluations in the course of the 5 year validity period of the certificate shall only be eligible for a Non-renewable, one year certificate. Deficiencies must be corrected in that one year period in order to maintain certification.

Upon receipt of a satisfactory annual evaluation, the individual shall be placed on the next step of the state salary schedule for the subsequent school year. (GBOE Rule GBI (160-3-1-.11) (O.C.G.A. 20-2-210; 20-2-211; 20-2-212; 20-2-281(B); 20-2-282; 50-14-3(6)) (GSCSS Policy GBI)

### **Appraisal of Performance (Complaints)**

In cases where the action is not applicable under the Fair Dismissal Law and the teacher disagrees with the evaluation procedures or results, complaints may be registered in the following manner:

- A. A conference to discuss observation results may be requested by the teacher within ten working days of receipt of results. Upon request, the evaluator is required to hold such a conference.
- B. Teachers may attach written comments to the evaluation records, Observation Records, Annual Evaluation Summary Reports, Professional Development Plans, and any documentation related to the GTDRI. The attachment must be submitted within ten working days of receipt of these records. When comments are attached to evaluation records, the teacher should indicate presence of the attachment in the appropriate space on the form. These written statements must be maintained as part of the official record.
- C. In cases where observations were conducted by evaluators other than the principal and the complaint is the result of an alleged violation of evaluation procedures, and where the complaint is not resolved in the conference with the evaluator, the teacher may request a conference with the principal within ten working days of the conference with the evaluator. The principal is required to hold the conference.
- D. Teachers who wish to pursue alleged violations of the evaluation procedures beyond complaints registered at the school level may pursue the issue directly with the local superintendent or designee. The request for review must be filed within ten working days of occurrence of the alleged violation or receipt of the Observation Record, documentation, or Annual Evaluation Summary Report. This request must include the reasons for the complaint and

copies of all supporting documentation. Within twenty working days, the superintendent or designee must consider the request and provide a written decision. Local decisions are not appealable to the Georgia Board of Education.

- E. All cases in which salary increments are withheld will be reviewed by the local superintendent or designee. (GBOE Rule GBI, 160-3-1-.11) (O.C.G.A. 20-2-210; 20-2-212; 50-14-3(6)) (GSCSS Policy GBI)

## **Contract Salary**

### A. Factors Determining Salary

A contracted employee's salary is based on: (1) the number of work days scheduled in the official school calendar, (2) the number of years creditable experience, (3) the salary schedule he/she is on, (4) annual evaluation, and (5) the highest level in-field certificate the employee has on file in the Human Resources Department. Therefore, for newly hired personnel, until a valid in-field certificate and certified experience records are on file, all quotations of salary are tentative. For newly hired personnel, when the Human Resources Department receives a valid in-field certificate, the employee's pay rate will be adjusted, if necessary, to the beginning date of employment or the beginning validity date on the certificate, whichever is most recent.

### B. Working Less Than the Number of Contracted Days

An employee's salary will be subject to an adjustment, on a pro rata basis, for the number of days in the annual work schedule that the employee does not work due to:

1. late employment
2. temporary relief from duty as the result of board action
3. absence from work without approval
4. non-compensated absence with approval
5. absence when the employee has no accumulated sick leave to cover the absences
6. early separation from employment
7. board action to adjust the official work schedule

(O.C.G.A. 20-2-212.1)

## **Creditable Experience**

The Human Resources Department is responsible for verifying and evaluating satisfactory experience for certification and/or salary purposes. The Griffin-Spalding County School System is responsible for verifying all experience not already credited to the teacher by the Georgia Department of Education prior to July 1, 1981. If there appears to be any irregularity in the reporting or verification of any experience, the teacher will be required to submit additional records. Contested experience, earned prior to July 1, 1981, may be appealed to the State Superintendent of Schools. Contested experience, earned July 1, 1981, and thereafter, may be appealed through local appeal channels.

In verifying experience, it is the responsibility of the employing superintendent to document all satisfactory prior experience consistent with the following standards. Credit will not be allowed for experience earned in the schools of Georgia without a valid certificate issued by the State, except in conditions noted under Section C. (This does not apply to experience earned prior to the 1950-51 school year, the first year in which all teachers were required by law to hold a certificate.)

Effective July 1, 1989, experience recognizable for salary purposes is determined according to the following regulations.

### A. Unit of Experience

1. Credit for one year of experience may be earned for any of the following:

- a. The standard unit of experience for professional school personnel is full-time employment for a regular school term.
- b. At least 120 days while under contract and eligible for State salary in a regular school term or fractions of school terms representing 120 days of consecutive service. (Example: January to June; September to December of consecutive academic years)
- c. Two one-half years of experience credit earned in regular school terms may be combined to constitute one year of experience. One-half year of experience may be earned by:
  - (1) 90 days of full-time employment under contract during one school year, or
  - (2) One year of one-half time employment under contract (120 days minimum)

One-half time employment is defined as a minimum of four hours of employment daily. Any service between one-half and full-time (eight hours) is considered one-half time for experience purposes. (See item G below)
- d. Six months of active military service combined with two or more months of teaching experience, provided the military service interrupts continuous teaching or prevents entrance into teaching immediately following college graduation.
- e. Eight full months of active military service (See Section D below)

2. Not more than one year of experience may be credited for any 12-month period.

3. Experience earned during a school year will be credited at the beginning of the next contract year.

**B. Experience in a Position for Which a Certificate or License Is Required**

(Teacher must hold a valid teaching certificate or professional license related to the field of employment during the period in which the experience is acquired.) (O.C.G.A. 20-2-200)

- 1. Serving in a local unit of administration (i.e. public elementary or secondary schools or regional education service agencies) in any professional position for which certification is required.
- 2. Serving in a private elementary or secondary school in any professional position for which certification is required. Private elementary or secondary schools must be regionally/state accredited at the time the experience is earned.
- 3. Teaching in elementary or secondary schools in foreign countries while a U.S. citizen and while holding a valid teaching credential recognized in the United States.
- 4. Teaching in kindergarten, pre-kindergarten, or Head Start programs, provided they are under the legal jurisdiction of a public school board of education or are regionally/state accredited.
- 5. Teaching elementary and secondary school subjects and trade subjects to children or to adults (including veterans), provided teaching was on a full-time basis and was under the direction of a local school administration, the Georgia Department of Education, or any other state agency.
- 6. Full-time teaching for a minimum of eight months under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA).
- 7. Full-time experience in speech and hearing centers.
- 8. Serving in a training school or youth development center in any professional position for which certification is required.
- 9. Serving in an internship or practicum sponsored cooperatively by an institution of higher education and a cooperating agency (clinic, local school, or agency of government) or an internship sponsored by a local unit of administration (i.e., local school system, or RESA) through an approved staff development program, on a full-time basis for a period of nine months or longer.
- 10. Serving as a full-time librarian in a bookmobile or public library, provided it serves primarily schools and school-age children. (Regional library experience earned on a public librarian's certificate will be accepted.)

11. Serving in professional employment in the U.S. DOE or in a state department of education.
12. Employment by a governmental agency when the work is primarily with school-age children. This applies to such areas as a social worker attached to a court or other related field.
13. Work in a clinical situation related to reading, psychology, or a field of special education, provided the individual holds a certificate or license.

C. Experience in a Position for Which a Certificate Is Not Required

The experience listed below requires a degree from an accredited college or university:

1. Full-time teaching in a regionally accredited college or university as a regular faculty member, provided the person holds academic rank (instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, or professor). Full-time is defined as teaching 15 quarter hours per quarter for three consecutive quarters and/or the individual holds a full-time contract from the institution.
2. Serving in a full-time professional position such as president, dean, counselor, or librarian in a regionally accredited college or university.
3. Teaching in the Peace Corps.
4. Serving in professional employment in the U.S. Department of Education or in a state department of education.
5. Serving in a private elementary or secondary school in any professional position, so long as the school was regionally/state accredited at the time the experience was earned.
6. Experience in the administration of the Child Nutrition Program in the U.S. Department of Agriculture is creditable experience for school nutrition directors.
7. Experience in a professional position which required the individual to organize, manage, or teach in a formal training program/environment (i.e. school business managers, school personnel directors, school facilities planners, or school plant directors).
8. Serving in a food service management supervisory position in a public or private organization is creditable experience for school nutrition directors. This includes the American Dietetic Association approved internship.

D. Experience for Which a Degree and Certificate Are Not Required

Serving on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States. A maximum of three years of credit may be allowed for military service according to the following schedule except for the requirements of the Veterans Reemployment Act.

8 full months = 1 year  
20 full months = 2 years  
32 full months = 3 years

Teaching experience that is a part of military duty may not be added to the maximum of three years of credit that may be allowed.

E. Experience That Shall Not Be Recognized for Either Salary or Certification

1. Supply or substitute teaching
2. Clerical or nonprofessional experience in an educational institution
3. Service as a member of a board of education
4. Service as a teacher aide or assistant
5. Teaching experience in private elementary or secondary schools not holding regional/state accreditation
6. Teaching in a college or university not holding regional accreditation

7. Occupational experience that is required for the issuance of an initial certificate to an individual will not apply toward experience which may be recognized for State salary increases.

#### F. Accrediting Agencies

Regional accreditation agencies currently recognized by the Georgia Department of Education are:

1. Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools
2. New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools
3. North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools
4. Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools
5. Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
6. Western Association of Colleges and Schools

The state accreditation agency currently recognized by the Georgia Department of Education is the officially recognized state accrediting commission in the state, e.g. in Georgia this is the Georgia Accrediting Commission; in some states it could be the State Education Agency.

#### G. Summary of State regulations regarding part-time service for credit

1. Part-time service earned prior to July 1, 1974

No credit will be recognized for part-time service earned prior to July 1, 1974.

2. Part-time service earned between July 1, 1974, and June 30, 1983

Credit for one year of experience may be earned by the completion of two full years of continuous one-half time teaching. This experience may be accumulated across two school years. One year of half-time teaching may not be combined with other earned experience such as military service or partial full-time teaching to accumulate a year of experience.

3. Part-time service earned between July 1, 1983, and June 30, 1989

Two one-half years of teaching credit earned in regular school terms may be combined to give one year of experience.

One-half year of experience may be earned by:

- a. 90 days of full-time teaching under contract during one school year or
- b. One year of one-half time teaching under contract (120 days minimum).

4. Part-time service earned after July 1, 1989

Two one-half years of experience credit earned in regular school terms may be combined to constitute one year of experience when earned in consecutive years. One-half year of experience may be earned by:

- a. 90 days of full-time employment under contract during one school year, or
- b. One year of one-half time employment under contract (120 days minimum).

One-half time employment is defined as a minimum of four hours of employment daily. Any time between one-half and full-time (eight hours) is considered one-half time for experience purposes.

Effective with the 1976-77 school year, computations for partial-year experience credit will be based upon the contract year of the applicant. This means that all days for which the teacher would be eligible for state salary, such as preplanning or postplanning and accrued sick or annual leave days taken, may be included in the computations.

## **Criminal Records Check**

In order to be employed for the first time by the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education, any applicant(s) for a position of teacher, administrator, or for any other certificated position must first submit to a fingerprint and criminal records check which will be conducted by and through the Griffin-Spalding County school system. Such fingerprinting and criminal record check shall be required even though the applicant may already have undergone fingerprinting and criminal record checks by another school district elsewhere. All certificated personnel will submit to a criminal records check and/or fingerprinting in order to renew their educator certificate.

The School District may employ persons subject to the express contract provision stating that employment will terminate immediately upon the employee being notified in writing either by hand delivery or deposit in the United States mail that the school district has received the report required by law or at the conclusion of 200 calendar days from the date of the contract, whichever shall occur first. Notwithstanding, the contract may, in the sole discretion of the board of education be extended for a definite period of time by the initialing of the contract by the superintendent and employee.

If the board elects to deny regular employment, the applicant or employee may within 10 days, request a hearing to present reasons why such a denial was inappropriate.

Criminal record check information shall be used by the School District and its officials as employees only for the purpose of determining whether to grant regular employment, and in any administrative or judicial proceeding calling such employment in question, and shall be stored, restricted and disposed of in such manner as may be required by federal or state authorities. (OCGA 20-2-211, as amended, 1994; 35-3-35)

## **Nonrenewal of Contract**

See page 14

## **Reduction in Force**

### **RESPONSIBILITIES AND PREROGATIVES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The most important functions of the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education are to employ personnel and management resources within the limitations defined by the funding sources of the school system.

Consequently, it shall be the prerogative of the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education (hereinafter the "Board") to abolish job positions, to reduce the length of the work year and salary of certified and non-certified personnel (hereinafter "to downgrade") and/or reduce the number of employees when seeking to cope effectively with program changes or financial exigency.

### **REASONS FOR REDUCTION IN FORCE (HEREINAFTER "RIF")**

The Board shall consider a reduction in the professional work force to include abolition of job positions, the down-grading of an employee's position, and/or the reduction of the number of employees, as a response to the following:

- a. A decrease in student enrollment in the school district which would necessitate a decrease in personnel, or discontinuation of programs;
- b. A change in state or local curriculum, personnel, or financial practices which would necessitate a change in or elimination of program or services provided by the Griffin-Spalding County School District;
- c. A loss of funds due to a reduction in state funds, reduction in local funds or other funds that make necessary a reduction in spending;
- d. A lack of funding for programs, personnel, or services provided by the Griffin-Spalding County School District;
- e. Any reasonable reorganization plan to achieve a more efficient school district.

### **APPLICABILITY OF POLICY**

This RIF policy shall apply to all personnel employed by the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education. Nothing in this policy, however, shall be construed to extend to professional personnel any expectation of re-employment or due process rights greater than are available to the specific employees under the Fair Dismissal Law of Georgia; nor is this policy to be construed to mandate the promotion of an employee to a

position of higher rank, authority, or compensation, even though the employee who is to be terminated may be qualified or certified for a higher position.

## **RIF PROCEDURE**

When the Superintendent of the Griffin-Spalding County School System determines that the application of this reduction in force policy is necessary, it shall be his or her primary responsibility to prepare for presentation to the Board of Education a plan for reduction in force in the affected program area(s).

In making recommendations for terminations or downgrading of employee positions, the Superintendent may consider any position or employee of the school system.

Factors to be considered by the Superintendent in devising a RIF plan shall include, first and foremost, the professional expertise, effectiveness, and overall job performance of individual employees. Only where demonstrated competence and expertise are equal among employees shall other factors such as tenure status, level of certification, and length of continuous service with the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education be considered in order to make recommendations for the termination or downgrading of an employee's position.

In order to develop a RIF plan, the Superintendent may consult with any and all school district personnel who might have information which would enable the Superintendent to rank employees according to overall job performance. Once the Superintendent has completed a comparative assessment of employees, he or she shall prepare and present a plan for reduction in force for Board approval and action.

## **NOTICE OF HEARING PROCEDUES**

If the board acts at the recommendation of the Superintendent to terminate an employee under contract or to downgrade an employee's position, the Superintendent shall notify the affected employee in a manner consistent with the provisions of Georgia's Fair Dismissal Law and he or she shall have whatever rights the Fair Dismissal Act provides for such employee.

### **Reprimand**

The superintendent may write a letter of reprimand to a teacher or other school employee for any valid reason. A copy of the letter of reprimand will be placed in the teacher's or employee's permanent personnel file. The teacher or employee receiving such a letter of reprimand shall have the right to appeal the decision of the superintendent to the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education. The board shall have the right to either affirm the decision of the superintendent or to reverse it. If the decision of the board is to reverse it, the letter of reprimand shall be removed from the teacher's or employee's permanent personnel file. (OCGA 20-2-944)

### **Resignation from Contract**

During a contract year, any employee desiring to relinquish a position with the Griffin-Spalding County School System shall give the superintendent written notice of this intention. This notice shall be given in sufficient time for a replacement to be employed. Any employee desiring to relinquish a position prior to the beginning of a new school year shall request the release from contract in writing to the superintendent. After May 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, employees will be released from his/her contract for the following school year only when there are extenuating circumstances and only after all positions in the system in the employee's certification field have been filled plus a qualified replacement found for the employee requesting release.

Except in situations which the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education, in the reasonable exercise of its discretion deems to be an emergency, the contract of employment shall not be terminated by the teacher without the written consent of the board. In the event that the teacher terminates the contract, whether by formal notice or by the willful failure or refusal to continue teaching, without such written consent or emergency situation, the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education may recommend to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission that the certificate of the teacher be suspended in accordance with the policies of the Georgia Board of Education.

## **Professional Standards Commission**

The Professional Standards Commission has assumed responsibility for setting and enforcing standards of competent professional performance and ethical conduct. The commission provides technical assistance, conducts formal investigations and makes recommendations in matters of incompetence, professional ethics, denial of certificate applications, suspension and revocation of teaching certificates and other educational concerns.

Upon the request of a local board of education, the State Board of Education, or one or more citizens of the State, the commission is authorized to investigate alleged violations by an educator of:

- A. any law of the State pertaining to educators or the profession of education
- B. the code of ethics of the commission
- C. rules, regulations, or policies of the State Board of Education, the Professional Standards Commission or a local board of education
- D. failure to meet or comply with standards of performance of the Professional Standards Commission, the State Board of Education, or a local board of education.

Based upon its investigation, the commission may furnish the representing party with findings of facts, conclusions of law, and recommendations. The commission may recommend:

- A. no action be taken against the educator
- B. that the educator be warned or reprimanded
- C. that the contract of the educator be:
  - 1. terminated
  - 2. suspended, or
  - 3. not renewed
- D. that the certificate of the educator be:
  - 1. suspended, or
  - 2. revoked

(O.C.G.A. 20-2-793; 20-2-794; 20-2-796; 20-2-797)

### **Educator Ethics Division - Contact Information**

**Educator Ethics Division**  
**Georgia Professional Standards Commission**  
**Two Peachtree Street**  
**Suite 6000**  
**Atlanta, GA 30303**

**Hours of Operation** Ethics offices are open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Appointments may be made with Ethics staff by calling the numbers listed below.

#### **Telephone**

(404) 232-2700 - Metro Atlanta  
(800) 537-5996 - Toll Free Outside Metro Atlanta Area  
(404) 232-2720 - FAX Line

**E-Mail** Individuals may also contact the Ethics Division with questions and requests for information via the Internet at our e-mail address: [ethics@gapsc.com](mailto:ethics@gapsc.com).

#### **THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS** Effective 2009

#### **Introduction**

The Code of Ethics for Educators defines the professional behavior of educators in Georgia and serves as a guide to ethical conduct. The Professional Standards Commission has adopted standards that represent the conduct generally accepted by the education profession. The code defines unethical

conduct justifying disciplinary sanction and provides guidance for protecting the health, safety and general welfare of students and educators, and assuring the citizens of Georgia a degree of accountability within the education profession.

### **Definitions**

“Certificate” refers to any teaching, service, or leadership certificate, license, or permit issued by authority of the Professional Standards Commission.

“Educator” is a teacher, school or school system administrator, or other education personnel who hold a certificate issued by the Professional Standards Commission and persons who have applied for but have not yet received a certificate. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, “educator” also refers to paraprofessionals, aides, and substitute teachers.

“Student” is any individual enrolled in the state’s public or private schools from preschool through grade 12 or any individual under the age of 18. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct for Educators, the enrollment period for a graduating student ends on August 31 of the year of graduation “Complaint” is any written and signed statement from a local board, the state board, or one or more individual residents of this state filed with the Professional Standards Commission alleging that an educator has breached one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators. A “complaint” will be deemed a request to investigate.

“Revocation” is the invalidation of any certificate held by the educator.

“Denial” is the refusal to grant initial certification to an applicant for a certificate.

“Suspension” is the temporary invalidation of any certificate for a period of time specified by the Professional Standards Commission.

“Reprimand” admonishes the certificate holder for his or her conduct. The reprimand cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.

“Warning” warns the certificate holder that his or her conduct is unethical. The warning cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.

“Monitoring” is the quarterly appraisal of the educator’s conduct by the Professional Standards Commission through contact with the educator and his or her employer. As a condition of monitoring, an educator may be required to submit a criminal background check (GCIC). The Commission specifies the length of the monitoring period.

“No Probable Cause” is a determination by the Professional Standards Commission that, after a preliminary investigation, either no further action need be taken or no cause exists to recommend disciplinary action.

### **Standards**

#### **Standard 1: Legal Compliance - An educator shall abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes.**

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to the commission or conviction of a felony or of any crime involving moral turpitude; of any other criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, trafficking, sale, or possession of a controlled substance or marijuana as provided for in Chapter 13 of Title 16; or of any other sexual offense as provided for in Code Section 16-6-1 through 16-6-17, 16-6-20, 16-6-22.2, or 16-12-100; or any other laws applicable to the profession. As used herein, conviction includes a finding or verdict of guilty, or a plea of *nolo contendere*, regardless of whether an appeal of the conviction has been sought; a situation where first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt pursuant to the charge was granted; and a situation where an adjudication of guilt or sentence was otherwise withheld or not entered on the charge or the charge was otherwise disposed of in a similar manner in any jurisdiction.

#### **Standard 2: Conduct with Students - An educator shall always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom.**

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. committing any act of child abuse, including physical and verbal abuse;
2. committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment;
3. committing any sexual act with a student or soliciting such from a student;
4. engaging in or permitting harassment of or misconduct toward a student;
5. soliciting, encouraging, or consummating an inappropriate written, verbal, electronic, or physical relationship with a student; and
6. furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student or allowing a student under the educator’s supervision or control (including but not limited to the educator’s residence) to consume alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs.

#### **Standard 3: Alcohol or Drugs - An educator should refrain from the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs during the course of professional practice.**

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. being on school premises or at a school-related activity while under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs;
2. being on school premises or at a school-related activity involving students while under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcohol. A school-related activity includes, but is not limited to, any activity sponsored by the school or school system (booster clubs, parent-teacher organizations, or any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum i.e. Foreign Language trips, etc); and
3. failing to monitor and/or prevent the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs by students who are under the educator’s supervision (including but not limited to at the educator’s residence or any other private setting).

#### **Standard 4: Honesty - An educator shall exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice.**

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to, falsifying, misrepresenting or omitting:

1. professional qualifications, criminal history, college or staff development credit and/or degrees, academic award, and employment history;
2. information submitted to federal, state, local school districts and other governmental agencies;
3. information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel;
4. reasons for absences or leaves;
5. information submitted in the course of an official inquiry/investigation; and
6. information submitted in the course of professional practice.

**Standard 5: Public Funds and Property - An educator entrusted with public funds and property shall honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility.** Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. misusing public or school-related funds;
2. failing to account for funds collected from students or parents;
3. submitting fraudulent requests or documentation for reimbursement of expenses or for pay (including fraudulent, or purchased degrees, documents, or coursework);
4. co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts;
5. using school property without the approval of the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee; and
6. using school system property for personal gain.

**Standard 6: Remunerative Conduct - An educator shall maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation.** Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. soliciting students or parents of students to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee;
2. accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest;
3. tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee; and
4. coaching, instructing, promoting athletic camps, summer leagues, etc. that involves students in an educator's school system and from whom the educator receives remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee. These types of activities must be in compliance with all rules and regulations of the Georgia High School Association.

**Standard 7: Confidential Information - An educator shall comply with state and federal laws and state school board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material and other information.**

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. sharing of confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information, family status and/or income, and assessment/testing results unless disclosure is required or permitted by law;
2. sharing of confidential information restricted by state or federal law;
3. violation of confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, violating local school system or state directions for the use of tests or test items, etc.; and
4. violation of other confidentiality agreements required by state or local policy.

**Standard 8: Abandonment of Contract - An educator should fulfill all of the terms and obligations detailed in the contract with the local board of education or education agency for the duration of the contract.** Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. abandoning the contract for professional services without prior release from the contract by the employer, and
2. willfully refusing to perform the services required by a contract.

**Standard 9: Failure to Make a Required Report - An educator should file reports of a breach of one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators, child abuse (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5), or any other required report.** Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. failure to report all requested information on documents required by the Commission when applying for or renewing any certificate with the Commission.
2. failure to make a required report of a violation of one or more standards of the Code of Ethics for educators of which they have personal knowledge as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner.
3. failure to make a required report of any violation of state or federal law soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. These reports include but are not limited to: murder, voluntary manslaughter, aggravated assault, aggravated battery, kidnapping, any sexual offense, any sexual exploitation of a minor, any offense involving a controlled substance and any abuse of a child if an educator has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused.

**Standard 10: Professional Conduct - An educator shall demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and preserves the dignity and integrity of the teaching profession.** Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to any conduct that impairs and/or diminishes the certificate holder's ability to function professionally in his or her employment position, or behavior or conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students.

**Standard 11: Testing - An educator shall administer state-mandated assessments fairly and ethically.**

Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. committing any act that breaches Test Security; and
2. compromising the integrity of the assessment.

**(4) Reporting:** Educators are required to report a breach of one or more of the Standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. Educators should be aware of **legal requirements and** local policies and procedures for reporting unethical conduct. Complaints filed with the Professional Standards Commission must be in writing and must be signed by the complainant (parent, educator, personnel director, superintendent, etc.). The Commission notifies local and state officials of all disciplinary actions. In addition, suspensions and revocations are reported to national officials, including the NASDTEC Clearinghouse.

**Disciplinary Action:** The Professional Standards Commission is authorized to suspend, revoke, or deny certificates, to issue a reprimand or warning, or to monitor the educator's conduct and performance after an investigation is held and notice and opportunity for a hearing are provided to the certificate holder. Any of the following grounds shall be considered cause for disciplinary action against the holder of a certificate:

1. unethical conduct as outlined in The Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-11;

2. disciplinary action against a certificate in another state on grounds consistent with those specified in the Code of Ethics for Educators;
3. order from a court or a request from DHR that the certificate should be suspended or denied for non-payment of child support;
4. notification from the GHEAC that the educator is in default and not in satisfactory repayment status on a student loan;
5. suspension or revocation of any professional license or certificate;
6. violation of any other laws and rules applicable to the profession; and
7. any other good and sufficient cause that renders an educator unfit for employment as an educator.

An individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended may not serve as a volunteer or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher or in any other position during the period of his or her revocation, suspension or denial for a violation of The Code of Ethics. The superintendent and the superintendent's designee for certification shall be responsible for assuring that an individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district. Both the superintendent and the superintendent's designee must hold GaPSC certification.

### **Student Reporting of Acts of Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct**

(a) Any student (or parent or friend of a student) who has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator or other school system employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor or administrator at his/her school.

(b) Any teacher, counselor or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school principal or principal's designee, and shall submit a written report of the incident to the school principal or principal's designee within 24 hours. If the principal is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee.

(c) Any school principal or principal's designee receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 shall make an oral report immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report in writing, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney.

Reports of acts of sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee not covered by O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 or 20-2-1184 shall be investigated immediately by school or system personnel. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the school principal or principal's designee shall make an immediate written report to the superintendent and the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division.

**Definitions:** "Sexual abuse" means a person's employing, using, persuading, inducing, enticing, or coercing any minor who is not that person's spouse to engage in any sexual act as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5.

"Sexual misconduct" includes behavior by an educator that is directed at a student and intended to sexually arouse or titillate the educator or the child. Educator sexual misconduct by an educator may include, but is not limited to, the following behavior:

1. Made sexual comments, jokes, or gestures.
2. Showed or displayed sexual pictures, photographs, illustrations, or messages.
3. Wrote sexual messages/graffiti on notes or the internet.
4. Spread sexual rumors (i.e. said a student was gay or a lesbian).
5. Spied on students as they dressed, showered or used the restroom at school.
6. Flashed or "mooned" students.
7. Touched, excessively hugged, or grabbed students in a sexual way.
8. Forced a student to kiss him/her or do something else of a sexual nature.
9. Talked or asked about a student's developing body, sexuality, dating habits, etc.
10. Talked repeatedly about sexual activities or sexual fantasies.
11. Made fun of your body parts.
12. Called students sexual names.

### **Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices**

In order to protect the integrity of our instructional program and to provide the most responsible supervision of our students, personal cell phones and other personal electronic devices should not be activated or used during the school day by faculty or staff. Exceptions due to extenuating circumstances may be approved by the principal on an individual basis.

Note that it is imperative that no wireless communication devices be used during emergency situations, particularly bomb threats, since frequencies emitted have the potential to detonate an explosive device.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

All students in the Griffin-Spalding County School System shall be afforded daily, the opportunity to pledge allegiance to the United States flag in the traditional, respectful manner as established by each individual school principal. It should be noted that this policy does not require that all students recite the pledge, only that each student who desires to do so is afforded daily opportunity.

(O.C.G.A. 20-2-310(c); 50-3-3; 50-3-4.1) (GSCSS Policy IKDA)

### **Public Relations**

Public relations are a by-product of all school activity. Successful implementation of public relations objectives is the responsibility of the board of education, administrators, teachers and support personnel. In order to promote effective public relations, the following beliefs are set forth:

- A. The cause of public education can be promoted, resulting in an improved, quality instructional program.
- B. All citizens have the right to complete and accurate information on all aspects of the educational program.
- C. It is the primary responsibility of the public relations representative assigned to each department or school, the administrators, and the director of public relations to communicate effectively with the many school system's publics.
- D. Public relations requires continuous internal (employee) as well as external (community) communication. This communication must be a planned, systematic, two-way process.
- E. Communication should incorporate the use of a variety of media.
- F. Educational communication must be dynamic and sensitive to change as determined by events and evaluation of the program. (GSCSS Policy KA)

### **Solicitation of Funds**

Employees shall participate in charity or fundraising campaigns on a voluntary basis. Any solicitation or collection of funds from employees must be recommended by the building administrator and be approved by the superintendent. The superintendent shall establish administrative procedures to cooperate with community organizations as they solicit funds from employees for their charitable organizations.

(GBOE Rule JKB (160-5-1-.11) (O.C.G.A. 16-12-33; 20-2-310; 20-2-1180) (GSCSS Policy GAI)

### **Test Data**

It is the policy of the Griffin-Spalding County Schools that no test data or results are to be released or made public in any way except through the appropriate central office personnel. All test information, gained in any manner within the Griffin-Spalding County Schools, falls within the jurisdiction of the school system and is not be used or released by any persons except with the written permission of the superintendent of the Griffin-Spalding County School System with the following exception: A child's individual test records are open to inspection by the parent or legal guardian of that child upon a request to the principal. (GBOE Rule II (160-3-1-.07) (O.C.G.A. 50-18-72) (GSCSS Policy IIC)

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

### **Drug-Free Workplace**

The Griffin-Spalding County board of education is concerned with the well-being of all employees of the Griffin-Spalding County School System. The board recognizes that a drug-free workplace encourages employee productivity and promotes the accomplishment of the board's missions and goals. In accordance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, the Griffin-Spalding County board of education prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of alcohol or a controlled substance in the workplace for all Griffin-Spalding County School System employees.

## A. Definitions

1. A controlled substance is defined as those drugs or substances listed in schedules I through V of the federal Controlled Substance Act, including but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, heroin, opiates and amphetamines. Not included are substances used in accordance with a valid prescription.
2. The workplace is defined as a geographic location at which an employee performs work pursuant to his or her employment with the Griffin-Spalding County board of education, including any travel while in travel status.
3. Conviction means a finding of guilt (including a plea of nolo contendere) or imposition of sentence or both by any judicial body charged with the responsibility to determine violations of the federal or state criminal drug statutes.
4. A criminal drug statute is defined as a federal or non-federal criminal statute involving the manufacture, distribution, dispensing, use or possession of any controlled substance.

## B. Procedures

As a condition of employment, employees will abide by the terms of the Drug-Free Workplace Policy (GAM) and shall notify the superintendent of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace not later than five days after such conviction. The Griffin-Spalding County School System shall notify the appropriate federal agency within 10 days after receiving notice of the conviction from the employee or otherwise after receiving the actual notice of such conviction.

Within 30 days of notification by the employee or otherwise receiving actual notice of such conviction, the board shall, with respect to any employee so convicted:

1. Take appropriate personnel action against such an employee, up to and including termination; or
2. Require such employee to participate satisfactorily in an alcohol or drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a federal, state or local health, law enforcement or other appropriate agency.

Entities contracting with the Griffin-Spalding County School System shall, as a condition of the contract, assure a drug-free workplace. For contracts, a drug-free workplace means a geographic location at which individuals are directly engaged in the performance of work pursuant to a contract with the Griffin-Spalding County board of education. (GSCSS Policy GAMA) (O.C.G.A., 20-2-11; 20-2-940 et seq.; 20-2-942; 45-23-1 through 45-23-9)

## **State Eye Protection Standard**

Eye protection devices will be provided for students, teachers, and visitors in the designated laboratory courses. Teachers of these courses are to instruct their students in the use and care of the devices, and provide for their security and safekeeping. Students who are issued the devices are responsible for returning them to the custody of their teacher immediately following their use. (GBOE Rule JGF 160-4-3-.10) (O.C.G.A., 20-2-16; 20-2-1130; 20-9-1)

## **Personnel Smoking**

In accordance with the "Georgia Smoke Free Air Act of 2005", smoking shall be prohibited 24-hours a day in all school buildings or properties owned or leased by the school district, and at all times in all school-owned vehicles, including all school buses. In addition, this prohibition includes the use of other tobacco products by employees at any time (24-hours a day) when on duty for the school district directly instructing or supervising students. Direct supervision includes coaching, band directing, acting as a sponsor or advisor of a club or similar school organization and other instructional roles. Employees shall not store or possess tobacco or tobacco-related products on their person or in their belongings in such a manner that such products are visible to students.

(O.C.G.A. 20-2-50) (GSCSS Policy GAN)

# **SALARY ADMINISTRATION**

## **Adjustment for New Certificate**

The salary schedules for a certified employee are based on the highest, valid Georgia certificate on file in the Human Resources Department. State funds necessary to finance salaries are based on valid, in-field teaching certificates. Salary adjustments for new certificates will be processed during the month the new certificate is received by the Human Resources Department provided it is received prior to the payroll cut-off date. If it is received after the cut-off date, the salary adjustment will be made the following month. Salary adjustments will be retroactive to the effective date of the level of the certificate, or the date of employment, whichever is most recent.

## **Advancement on the Salary Schedule**

The contract salary of a 190-day teacher holding a valid, professional, in-field certificate will be advanced to the next consecutive step on the salary schedule unless: (1) the maximum progression step for the position has been reached; (2) services were contracted for fewer than 120 days in the previous academic year; (3) certification requirements have not been met; (4) insufficient funds are budgeted for salary advancement; or (5) the teacher fails to receive a satisfactory performance evaluation for the prior year.

A teacher may advance only one step on the salary schedule per year and must work one year on each step. Step advancement normally occurs only at the beginning of an academic year. Under regulations effective July 1, 1983, professional staff employed on 10-month, 11-month, or 12-month contracts must be under contract only 120 days in the previous academic year to be eligible for a step increase.

## **Brawner Bonus**

The Brawner Bonus is to be distributed equally among certified high school staff, including the principal. (GSCSS Policy GBA)

## **Certification Ineligibility**

In the event a teacher is not able to secure an appropriate Georgia teaching certificate, the teacher's services will be terminated at the discretion of the school system. Salary will be paid at the substitute teacher rate. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-940(a))

## **Creditable Experience**

See page 34

## **Extended Day/Year Salaries**

The Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education recognizes as necessary the extension of secondary educational programs through the use of extended day/year funds in the Quality Basic Education Act. These extended day/year funds are generated through the full-time equivalency funding process for the categories of 9-12 regular high school, 9-12 non-vocational laboratory program and the 9-12 vocational laboratory program. These funds are reflected in the direct instructional cost allocations in the above categories.

The board establishes the following criteria that apply to all instructors receiving extended day/year salaries.

- A. The extended time required will be beyond the employee's normal eight hour work day and 190 day work year.
- B. All approved extended instructional activities relate to state approved instructional student competencies.
- C. Teachers will be limited to teaching a maximum of one additional hour beyond the teaching work day and to one segment out of field.

- D. Payments will be made only for work performed beyond the normal eight hour work day.
- E. Monthly/yearly documentation of extended salary time and program responsibilities will be maintained and reported to the Georgia Department of Education.
- F. Payments for extended day are based on the hourly rate of the teacher's state base salary times the number of days worked. Local supplement is not calculated in extended-day salary.
- G. Payments for extended year are based on the daily rate of the teacher's state base salary times the number of days worked.

(GBOE Rule GBA(1) (160-4-3-.09); GBA(2) (160-43-.11); GBA(3)(160-4-3-.04); GBA(4) (160-3-1-.01) (O.C.G.A. 20-2-168(d)(e); 20-2-182(d); 20-2-212) (GSCSS Policy GBA)

### **Extra-duty Assignments**

Personnel may be assigned by the principal or administrator additional duties requiring daily and calendar schedules exceeding the schedules for regular assignments. These assignments may include athletic coaching, instruction in instrumental music, on-the-job training, counseling, sponsorship of student organizations and other activities which are a part of the school program.

All personnel receiving salary supplements are employed with the specific understanding that duties shall be performed in addition to classroom instruction.

Extra-duty assignments made by the principal or other administrator which are compensated in addition to the contracted salary are specifically duties assigned on a semester or annual basis and are accepted with the understanding that they are exclusive of all contract provisions, including due process provisions of the Georgia Code.

### **Extra-duty Supplements**

Supplements for coaching assignments and club sponsorships are paid for the extended daily and calendar schedules which are necessary for practice, competitive events and other activities related to the respective programs. A maximum of four supplemental activities will be assigned to a teacher.

Teachers who complete a partial assignment will receive a proration of the supplement as recommended by the principal and approved by the Human Resources Department.

### **Full-time Definition**

Full-time employees are defined as those employed twenty (20) hours or more per week; not considered a temporary or emergency employee and paid on a monthly base salary.

### **Funding Adjustments**

The contract amount may be decreased according to any decrease in the Georgia Teacher Salary or any decrease of Federal funds or other grant funding from the date of execution of the contract or the termination thereof. The rate is also subject to an adjustment upward or downward according to the Quality Basic Education Act (as amended) applicable to the classification and type of service to which the teacher has been assigned.

In the event funding sources are adjusted, the Griffin-Spalding County School System's salary schedules will be adjusted by an equitable amount for each salary step. In the event funds for designated programs are discontinued, the positions funded by the special grants will be terminated when the funds have been exhausted.

### **Minimum Salary for Teachers**

The board shall not pay to any teacher or other certificated professional personnel in its employment a salary less than that prescribed by the index schedule of minimum salaries for the State of Georgia. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-212)

### **Pay Dates**

Professional employees are paid once a month on the last work day of the month. When the last work day of the month falls on a holiday or weekend, the check is paid on the previous workday. An exception is the month of November when employees are paid the last work day prior to Thanksgiving.

### **Placement - Initial**

A teacher employed by the Griffin-Spalding County School System will receive a salary based on experience and the highest, valid, in-field certificate. The initial salary placement will be based on the salary schedule and policies adopted by the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education.

A. Active military experience will be recognized to a maximum of three years for initial salary placement as follows:

1. One year of experience for 8 full months.
2. Two years of experience for 20 full months.
3. Three years of experience for 32 full months or more

Prior experience in professional positions in the Griffin-Spalding County School System or in other systems will be recognized at full credit for initial salary placement. It is the employee's responsibility to provide acceptable verification of experience in other systems. Salaries will be adjusted for unverified experience.

Experience is accepted based on the standards set by the Georgia Department of Education.

### **Retroactive Adjustments**

Salary adjustments are sometimes necessary due to: (1) late employment, (2) temporary relief from duty by board action, (3) absence without approval, (4) non-compensated absence with approval, (5) absence when there is no accumulated leave to cover such absence, (6) early separation, (7) adjustments in official work schedules, (8) certification irregularities, (9) new upgraded certificates, (10) verification of experience irregularities, (11) changes in supplemental duty assignments, and (12) other factors.

### **Salary Deductions**

#### Garnishments

The superintendent is instructed to accept garnishment subpoenas on school employees as required by state law.

#### Social Security

Social Security coverage became available to teaching personnel on July 1, 1960. Social Security is provided for all personnel except for teachers who elected not to participate at the time of the referendum.

## **STAFF-COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

### **Attendance by Employees**

The Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education recognizes that exemplary punctuality and attendance by each member of the staff is necessary and expected in order to maintain an efficient and effective school system. Each staff member is expected to be in attendance and on time each and every day of the work calendar; however because the board recognizes that certain absences are unavoidable, allowances will be made in accordance with leave policies approved by the board. Staff members who must be absent from duty are expected to return to active service at the earliest time commensurate with good health, safety, and reasonable personal considerations.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect**

All staff members are required by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect to the appropriate authorities. Principals and supervisors train all staff under their immediate supervision and authority in procedures to follow for reporting suspected child abuse and neglect. All suspected cases of child abuse shall be reported to the principal who in turn will make a report to the Department of Family and Children Services. The principal shall also notify the school social

worker at the Central Office of all referrals of child abuse and neglect received. The school social workers are the official contact persons on child abuse and will make any other necessary contacts with the Department of Family and Children Services. (GBOE Rule JGI (160-4-8-.04) (O.C.G.A. 190705) (GSCSS Policy GAEC/JGI)

## **Dress**

Dress Code - For all certified, instructional support, and clerical staff

Staff choices concerning dress send clear messages to our students, our colleagues, and our community. It is important that those choices demonstrate a high level of professionalism. Professional dress enables instructional staff to command greater respect from students, and as a result, ensure a learning environment more conducive to education.

Female personnel are expected to wear dresses, suits, slacks, and skirts. Pants must be mid-calf or longer. Sleeveless outer garments may be worn as long as under garments are not visible. No tank tops or revealing tops are to be worn. Dresses and skirts may not be more than two inches above the knee. Mini-skirts, sun dresses, beach dresses, and spaghetti-strap dresses are not appropriate.

Male personnel are expected to wear suits or slacks with a collared shirt or turtleneck (no polo type shirts). A tie is required with a collared shirt, except in the case where a teacher works in a lab and/or around machinery or where ties would be a safety hazard. (Lab coats and ties are recommended.) Slacks similar to Dockers or khakis, wool pants, or dress pants are acceptable. Socks must be worn.

Professional, safe, and non-distracting footwear is expected. Casual flip-flops and slippers are not acceptable. Athletic shoes may not be worn unless prescribed by a physician.

Athletic wear such as fleece and nylon pants and shirts and any form-fitting apparel shall not be permitted.

Jeans and T-shirts or sweat shirts with the school logo will only be permitted on specially designated workdays approved by the principal/supervisor.

Physical education personnel should choose dress appropriate to the activity in which they are participating. These personnel may wear shorts not more than three inches above the knee, athletic wear, and athletic shoes. Shorts must be covered when athletic personnel are in other parts of the school building.

Hats are not appropriate. Head covers that are required for religious purposes or to honor cultural tradition are allowed.

Jewelry, makeup, perfume and cologne should be in good taste. No visible body piercings, other than pierced ears, are allowed. No visible tattoos of inappropriate content.

Building administrators have the responsibility to enforce the dress code, approve exceptions for documented medical conditions, and the right to deem attire inappropriate.

## **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

### **Components**

The Griffin-Spalding County School System's staff development program addresses assessed needs based on professional development and instructional effectiveness.

A. Needs based on professional development for certificated and noncertificated teaching, leadership, and service personnel are considered based on three stages of professional development:

1. Induction refers to the process of preparing persons to enter a new field of employment. It can continue for three years. Induction refers to beginning

teachers or to any employee who has accepted an assignment in a new function.

2. Specific needs development means the provision of staff development opportunities to assist persons who have been employed in a field for three or more years and who must overcome deficiencies identified through their annual performance evaluations.
  3. Enhancement is the provision of learning opportunities which renew persons professionally by addressing needs that have been identified through the annual performance evaluations.
- B. Needs based on evaluations of the effectiveness of instructional programs are also considered. An educational program is effective to the extent that students are achieving the objectives of that program. If they are not, then program changes may be needed. The competencies needed by personnel to perform adequately in the roles required by the new or revised educational program are staff development needs.

To determine staff development needs based upon instructional effectiveness, educational programs are grouped into four broad categories: general education, special education, remedial education, and instructional support. (GSCSS Procedure GAD-R)

### **Professional Learning Opportunities**

The Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education endorses the concept of local staff development and is committed to this effort regarding the educational personnel employed by the Griffin-Spalding County School System. Such employees will be provided opportunities to add to or improve their competencies and skills through a planned staff development program.

Credit for participation in such activities may be applied toward professional certification renewal only under the conditions and limitations specified in the Griffin-Spalding County Comprehensive Plan for Staff Development as approved by the local board of education and the State Department of Education. (GBOE Rule GAD(1) 160-3-3-.04; GAD(2) 160-3-3-.05; GAD(4) 160-4-9-.03) (GSCSS Policy GAD) (O.C.G.A.; 20-2-167(a); 20-2-182(g); 20-2-200(b); 20-2-201; 20-2-210; 20-2-213; 20-2-230; 20-2-232; 20-2-250(a))

## Contractual Handbook Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Griffin-Spalding County School System Contractual Handbook. Further, I acknowledge that I have an individual responsibility to review the information contained in this handbook. I am also aware that a current copy is maintained on the school system web site at [www.spalding.k12.ga.us](http://www.spalding.k12.ga.us) and that I may view and/or print this copy.

---

Print Your Name

---

Signature

---

Date

---

School/Work Site