

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PICKENS COUNTY

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

2019-2020

The *2019-2020 School District of Pickens County Employee Handbook* gives an overview of district policies and rules and includes a brief description of the benefits offered to employees. Employees may access all board policies by visiting the School District of Pickens County's website at www.pickens.k12.sc.us.

Nothing in the employee handbook constitutes or creates an express or implied contract of employment. This 2019-2020 handbook supersedes all previous handbooks or other documents that address the same subject matter as the information in the handbook. The School District of Pickens County can modify or alter the handbook at any time.

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DISTRICT INFORMATION

General Statement of Policies for District Operation

Each school in the School District of Pickens County (SDPC) is a part of a single system and is subject to the policies set forth by the board of trustees through duly appointed administrators who serve as executive officers for the board.

The board delegates to the superintendent full responsibility and authority for administration of the schools in accordance with board policies.

The principal of each school has the authority to control and operate the school in keeping with administrative regulations of the district. The principal will supervise instruction, discipline, school activities, and the school facility. The principal has the authority to assign duties and tasks and to see that these activities are properly performed. The teacher is responsible for presenting effectively the courses of study as set up for the school, being constantly mindful of the teacher's role in the physical, mental, and social development of students. Teaching is the most important part of the school organization, and it must be effective if the school is to reach its potential.

Our Vision

The School District of Pickens County will strive to provide a quality 21st century education that prepares all students for success beyond the classroom.

Our Mission

The SDPC promotes high achievement, personal responsibility, and character development to prepare students for college, career, & citizenship opportunities.

Core Values

- Act with Integrity
- Commit to Excellence
- Take It Personally
- Make It Better
- Understand That We Are Empowered and Accountable
- Collaborate
- Remain Open-Handed

Board of Trustees

District 1	Dr. Betty Bagley, (864) 356-3939, bettybagley@pickens.k12.sc.us
District 2	Mr. Philip Bowers, (864) 868-2789, phillipbowers@pickens.k12.sc.us
District 3	Mr. Shannon Haskett, (864) 346-7069, shannonhaskett@pickens.k12.sc.us
District 4	Dr. Brian Swords, (864) 221-3642, brianswords@pickens.k12.sc.us
District 5	Mrs. Betty Garrison, (864) 630-8257, bettygarrison@pickens.k12.sc.us
District 6	Mrs. Karla Kelley, karlakelley@pickens.k12.sc.us
District 7	Mrs. Alice Vander Linden, (864) 444-6662, alicevanderlinden@pickens.k12.sc.us

Senior Leadership Team

Superintendent	Dr. Danny Merck
Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services	Mrs. Sharon Huff
Assistant Superintendent for Human Resource Services	Dr. Stephanie Lackey
Assistant Superintendent for Administration - Elementary	Mr. Clif Alexander
Assistant Superintendent for Administration - Secondary	Mr. Josh Young
Chief Financial Officer	Mr. Clark Webb
Executive Director of Technology	Dr. Barbara Nesbitt
Executive Director of Special Services	Mrs. Cathy Ashton
Coordinator of Communications	Mr. John Eby

District Services Staff

Names, photographs, and contact information for district services staff are located on the district website under [Departments](#).

District Directory

The most current directory of schools and sites, addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers and administrators can be seen on our website under [Schools/Directory](#).

GENERAL INFORMATION

Work Days

Certified personnel will work 190 days in a school year unless another number of days is specified in the employee's contract. Non-certified employees will work days as scheduled for the position.

Calendars of work days are published annually on the district website under the Calendars link. An employee's supervisor must approve any change in the work days listed. See *2019-2020 Work Schedule Memo* in the [Employee Work Calendar section](#) under Calendars/2019-2020 on the district website. Summer school attendance that conflicts with the principal/director's work schedule will be subject to approval by the superintendent.

Section 1(a), Section 1, Act 436, of the *1984 Education Improvement Act* states that ten (10) days of the 190 days annually may be used for the preparation of the opening and closing of schools for in-service, training, and for teacher planning and preparation time. Further, only five of the ten days may be used for the opening and closing of schools. Five days must be used for professional development activities.

Working Hours

Teachers

The **minimum** school day for teachers will be seven and a half (7.5) hours. All teachers will be present in their classrooms at 8:00 a.m. Principals will determine the daily schedule based on the needs of the individual schools.

Employees are responsible for before-school and after-school duties as assigned. In addition, certified employees are responsible for attending any administrative and/or professional meetings called by the principal/superintendent or designee.

Employees will not leave the school grounds during the school day without express permission from their principals or assistant principals, and they must sign in and out. Those employees with permission to leave must register their departure and arrival times.

Guidance Centers and Media Centers

Guidance centers and media centers will open at least thirty (30) minutes prior to the opening of school and close no earlier than thirty (30) minutes after dismissal of school. This schedule is considered minimum. On many school days, the hours may need to be longer.

Attendance at Administrative and Professional Meetings

Certified employees are responsible for attending any administrative and/or professional meetings called by the principal/superintendent or designee unless excused by the principal/superintendent or designee.

Principals/Directors may hold faculty or instructional meetings for school teams on the second and fourth Tuesday afternoons of each month. Times and locations will be announced by the principal/director, and employees should reserve these times on their calendars.

However, provisions for sick leave and death in the immediate family apply to professional development events.

Breaks

Breaks are not required by the Fair Labor Standards Act, and SDPC does not give paid breaks to classified employees. A school-level, classified employee (food service, custodian, and secretary) who is on call may take a lunch break that is less than 30 minutes without reflecting it on his/her time sheet. Since the employee is on call, the time is counted as a part of the work day. Lunch periods that are more than 30 minutes and are unencumbered are added to the employee's work day and are not paid.

District-level, classified employees have a one-hour unpaid, unencumbered lunch each day. No paid breaks are given during the day.

Inclement Weather Closings

In case of inclement weather (primarily ice or snow), the following procedures will be followed if the superintendent determines the regular schedule should be altered:

Early Dismissal

- The superintendent, with the advice of staff, will decide if school is to be dismissed early.
- The superintendent's staff will notify all principals/directors immediately by telephone and email. As soon as all principals are notified, district staff members will notify the media and will send a phone and email announcement to staff and parents.
- Buses that need refueling will be given priority and dispatched immediately.
- Each principal/director will develop a dismissal plan utilizing staff necessary for supervision of students remaining in school or those returning by bus.
 - All other employees are to be released as the principal/director deems appropriate.
 - Principals/Directors and designated staff should remain in the building until all students have been picked up and the area bus supervisor has notified the principal that all buses have completed their routes.
 - Each principal/director is to report to the **superintendent or designee** before leaving the building.
- All extracurricular activities, meetings, practices, night classes, etc., are to be cancelled, unless specifically approved by the **superintendent**.

- Central Services staff and Operational Services staff will be dismissed after district administrators determine that personnel are in place to take care of students who have not been picked up and that no emergency situations exist in the district's buildings.
- If a staff member who normally works part-time or evening hours does not work because schools are dismissed early or delay opening, he/she must make up the time missed or must take personal or vacation time for time missed.
- Faculty and staff members who report to work at their regular time and work until being dismissed by their principal will receive full pay for any day that the **superintendent** directs that employees be sent home due to early dismissal of schools.
- Substitute teachers will be paid for 1/2 of the day if the principal dismisses them before 11:30 a.m. If they are dismissed after 11:30 a.m., they will be paid for the full day.

School Cancelled/Delayed Opening

- If roads become hazardous during the night, the **superintendent or her designee** will immediately notify individuals assigned to check road conditions
- A decision about the closing or delaying school will be made by 6:00 a.m., if possible. Once a decision is made to delay or cancel school, all principals and media will be notified. Information will be posted on the SDPC website, and a phone and email message will be sent to staff and to parents.
- If doubtful weather conditions exist, bus drivers are not to leave home until instructions are provided by the area bus supervisors. Bus drivers should not begin routes if roads cannot be traveled safely, regardless of instructions. If school opening is delayed, drivers will delay their routes accordingly.
- Because of lunch requirements, school will not be delayed beyond two hours.
 - Each principal will determine which staff members will report at their regular times.
 - All 220-day and 230-day employees—using common sense about the severity of road conditions—should report to work at their regular times.
- ***Employees must make up any days they miss due to school closings.***
 - A 230-day or 240-day employee who misses a work day(s) because of inclement weather will make up the missed work day(s) under the direction of her/his supervisor; or
 - The employee also has the option of taking the day(s) off without pay (Vacation Day) or taking personal day(s).
- Each principal should make an effort to check her/his building and make sure no students are at school and then notify the district before leaving the school. ***The principal will determine if it is necessary for any staff members – including custodians – to report to work when school is cancelled.***
- Principals are responsible for seeing that snow and/or ice is removed from sidewalks prior to the reopening of school. ***If school is closed, for reasons other than weather, the principal should report to her/his building and check in with the superintendent or his designee.***

- ***The Director of Operations may call plant engineers and custodians to the building in case of an emergency situation.***
- In the event there is no school, ***all extra-curricular activities, meetings, practices, night classes, etc. are to be cancelled*** unless specifically approved by the ***superintendent***.

Hourly Employees

- When schools experience a ***delayed opening***, hourly employees should report at their regular times.
- If an hourly employee cannot report to work at the regular time because of weather conditions or child care issues, the employee should either (1) make up the missed time under the direction of his/her supervisor or (2) take personal leave or vacation time for time missed.
- If an employee normally works part-time or evening hours and does not work because schools are ***dismissed early or delayed***, he/she must either (1) make up the missed time under the direction of his/her supervisor or (2) take personal or vacation time for time missed.
- Staff members who report to work at their regular time and work until being dismissed by their principal will receive full pay for any day that the superintendent directs employees be ***dismissed early***.
- When school is ***cancelled***, the principal will determine if it is necessary for any staff members – including custodians – to report to work.

4-Year-Old Kindergarten

- 4K morning classes ***will not operate*** when there is any delay.
- 4K afternoon classes ***will operate on a normal schedule*** when there is a delayed opening of schools.
- Parents should be notified in advance of any anticipated inclement weather, that 4K morning classes will not operate when there is a delay.

Organizational Relationships and Communication

Lines of authority and structured communication channels do not restrict, in any way, the cooperative, sensible working together of employees at all levels to develop the best possible school programs and services. When employees work together, the lines of communication formed represent avenues for a two-way flow of ideas to improve the programs and operations of the system.

The board of trustees asks the superintendent to make sure that all employees clearly understand the working relationships of the school system. The board approves lines of direct authority and expects each employee with a professional concern to refer matters requiring administrative action to his/her administrator (the person to whom he/she is responsible). When necessary, that administrator will refer such matters to the next highest administrative authority.

The board also expects employees to keep immediate supervisors informed of their professional activities by whatever means their supervisors deem appropriate. All employees have the ultimate right to appeal a decision made by an administrator through grievance procedures established in Policy GAE or through an orderly process of concerns as indicated above. Policy GAE outlines the key elements involved in due process.

Complaints

Any criticism of personnel in a district school/site shall first be discussed with the administrator. If agreement cannot be reached through this procedure, the district chain of command shall be followed to resolve the issue(s) at the lowest possible level. This policy applies to complaints and not formal grievances which are considered under Policy GAE.

Public Relations

District employees should use every opportunity to inform the public about the vision, mission, and goals of the district and schools. This is the most effective advertising possible. The following precautions apply, however, to discussion of school business:

- Individual students and their information status are to be discussed only with their parents, the school counselor, or appropriate administration personnel.
- Any criticism of personnel or practices in any school should be discussed with the principal or director of that school.
- Any confidential or privileged information that teachers obtain is to be treated confidentially until such time as the board of trustees or district administrative personnel make it public through news release or board action.
- If you are contacted by a member of the media about your school or the district, call Communication Services at 864-397-1045 before responding to media requests.

District Communications

Websites

The primary form of district communication is the SDPC website. Each employee has a login that allows him/her to access district information, news, and resources in the [Staff Portal section](#) of the site. This section can be reached by clicking on the red “Faculty” button at the top of the site.

Email

All employees are provided district email accounts. Employees are expected to use their email accounts for communication according to the guidelines included in Policy IJNDB and the accompanying regulations. See “Technology Use and Data Management” section for more information.

To maintain security, employees should change passwords regularly.

Schoology

Schoology allows SDPC to communicate with parents to provide timely information about grades, assignments and attendance information.

SchoolMessenger

SchoolMessenger allows SDPC to communicate with parents and staff by telephone and email regarding emergencies, school closings, absences, and school events.

SchoolMessenger draws information from both the CSI (employee information system) and PowerSchool (student information system). An employee who changes a name, address, phone number, cell number or personal email address should request updates. See handbook sections *Name Changes in Personnel Records* and *Other Information Changes in Personnel Records*.

Emergency Drills

Fire Drills

In accordance with state law (59-63-910 and 59-63-920), fire drills will be conducted in each school at least once a month. Fire drills are held without warning, and definite instructions will be furnished to teachers and students as to route and manner of exit during fire drills. Each principal/director will take appropriate action to ensure compliance with the state law pertaining to fire drills.

A written report of a fire drill shall be submitted to the appropriate district administrator on the next workday following the drill, giving time, day and date of drill. (See Policy EEBC)

Tornado Procedures

Each principal/director will develop a tornado safety program and publicize it sufficiently in his/her school.

Accidents

In case of accidents involving any student, every precaution should be made to relieve and safeguard the injured. If the injury is such that the teacher cannot take care of it, the principal/director should be notified immediately. All accidents necessitating a physician's attention should be reported to the principal/director. An *Accident/Incident Investigation* form should be completed on all accidents requiring medical attention. The school nurse should be included in the communication process.

Employees who are involved in accidents should complete a *First Report of Injury* and arrange treatment by one of the district's workers' compensation doctors. Principals and school secretaries have the information. (See Workers' Compensation in Benefits section.)

EMPLOYMENT

Equal Employment Opportunity

The School District of Pickens County operates without discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, national origin, age, or disability in compliance with Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504, and all other applicable civil rights legislation. Prior to employment, state law requires the district to request a criminal record history check for past actions of crimes. For this reason, information about date, birth, sex, and race is requested as part of the application process.

Compliance with the Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

Title IX states that "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

The administration of the School District of Pickens County has affirmed that the district is in compliance with the requirements of Title IX and does not discriminate on the basis of sex in any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. This affirmation of non-discrimination extends to employment and admission.

Inquiries concerning the application of Title IX or complaints alleging non-compliance within the School District of Pickens County should be directed to the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 101 Marietta Towers, Atlanta, Georgia 30323, or to Dr. Stephanie Lackey or Mr. Marion Lawson, the district's Title IX Coordinators, 1348 Griffin Mill Road, Easley, South Carolina 29640, telephone 864-397-1000. The coordinator will advise all complainants of the procedure by which all complaints will be processed by the district.

Employee Health Examinations

No person will be initially hired to work in the district until appropriately evaluated for tuberculosis according to the guidelines approved by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC). Each applicant must obtain a health certificate from a licensed physician certifying that the applicant does not have tuberculosis in an active state. The certificate must be filed in the Human Resource Services office.

Re-evaluation will not be required for employment in consecutive years unless otherwise indicated by such guidelines. (See Policy GBRA Pre-Employment Tuberculosis Screening.)

Name Changes in Personnel Records

If you have a name change, you must submit a copy of the updated Social Security card to Lori Willoughby in Human Resources. A name will not be changed in employee personnel records until then.

Employee Self-Service Portal

The Employee Self-Service Portal allows SDPC employees to view their demographic information, deductions, leave balance, payroll check and W2 information electronically. Employees are also able to submit address/phone number, W4, direct deposit and other changes electronically to the appropriate person at Central Services. The link to the ESS portal is found on the district website in the [Staff Portal](#). Employees should send questions or problems concerning ESS to their school or district department secretary who will then contact Amanda Gilstrap in Payroll for assistance. As of January 2013, regular employees no longer receive a printed direct deposit slip.

Contact Information Changes in Personnel Records

Keeping your personal information updated is very important. We use the contact information in our *Employment & Payroll Database* and in *PowerSchool* when we communicate with staff. For example, you will receive phone and email messages about school closings or delays only if your information is correct in both the *Employment & Payroll Database* and *PowerSchool* systems.

If you change your address, phone number, cell number or personal email address, you must request the following updates:

1. Changes in the Employment & Payroll Database, benefits, and the South Carolina Retirement System
 - Employees with Benefits
 - All systems can be changed through [MyBenefits website](#)
 - Log in to [MyBenefits](#) and make changes
 - Employees without Benefits
 - Email Benefits Specialists Missy Ducker or Tammy Brazinski.
2. Changes in the PowerSchool Student/Teacher Database
 - Data entry clerks update PowerSchool information
 - Ask your school's data entry clerk to make changes
3. Teaching License
 - Wanda Wells, licensure specialist, updates names and addresses on professional teaching licenses.
 - Submit a *South Carolina Department of Education Request for Change/Action* form to the South Carolina Department of Education.

- Phone numbers are not maintained at the South Carolina Department of Education, so no request to update a phone number is needed.

Contract Employment

After signing a contract, the employee shall comply with applicable state law and shall not break or seek to terminate the contract except for good and just cause and then only after giving notice in writing to the superintendent and after a suitable replacement is found.

All contracts not signed by personnel within ten (10) days after receipt shall be considered null and void.

Assignments

Assignment of all certified personnel will be the responsibility of the superintendent or his/her designee. The superintendent or his/her designee is authorized to transfer professional personnel to another school or location when determined to be in the best interest of the district. Assignments and reassignments within a school, building or office are the responsibility of the principal or supervisor.

On or before August 15, the superintendent or his/her designee will notify all certified personnel of their tentative assignment for the ensuing school year. The basic considerations in the assignment and transfer/reassignment of certified personnel are the well-being of the program of instruction and the best interest of the district. It is, therefore, the board's policy that certified personnel be assigned/reassigned on the basis of their qualifications, the needs of the district or a particular school, and, to the extent possible, the desires of the employees. In all cases, however, the needs of the district and its students will be of paramount consideration.

The principal is responsible for recommending to the superintendent all certified and classified personnel for a school. However, assignments to particular grades and schools are tentative. Final placement will depend on enrollment when school begins. (See Policy GBE Assignment of Personnel)

Transfers

A certified employee who wishes to transfer to another school in the district may indicate so on the intent form submitted in December. After December, requests may be made by writing to Human Resource Services.

The superintendent reserves the right to make internal transfers, when necessary.

The procedure for requesting a transfer is as follows:

1. The certified employee will discuss with his/her principal/director the desire to transfer.
2. Human Resource Services will be informed of the employee's desire to transfer, either by the intent form, by letter, or by application.

3. When a principal/director wishes to employ the transferee, he/she should:
 - inform Human Resource Services of the intention to recommend the applicant, then
 - inform the principal/director of the employee who will be transferred.
4. If the certified employee has not received a notice of transfer by the last day of the school year, he/she will remain in the present position for the following school year.
5. Any transfer after the last day of school will be on mutual consent of the Human Resource Services and the principals/directors involved.
6. All transfers are subject to approval of the superintendent.

Job Vacancies

SDPC uses SchoolRecruiter, an online system, to manage job openings, applications, interviews and employment.

Applications for all vacant positions are accepted through *SchoolRecruiter*. [Instructions for Using SchoolRecruiter](#) can be found in “Joining our Team?” section on the district website.

Reduction in Force

To provide for the orderly reassignment of personnel when excess employees exist at a particular school or work location or district-wide in a particular assignment or classification, the board authorizes the superintendent, or designee, to reassign personnel according to established procedures when a school, work location, or the school district is overstaffed.

Whenever the program manager determines that there is an excess of certified staff members in an active assignment in a particular school or site, the district will follow the procedures as outlined in Policy GBQA/GBQB Instructional Staff/Administrative Staff Reduction in Force.

Procedures for classified reduction in force are outlined in Policy GCQA/GCQB Classified Personnel Reduction in Force.

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT AND WELFARE

Employee Conduct

The board reaffirms one of the oldest beliefs in education, which is “One of the best methods of instruction is that of setting a good example.”

The board expects district employees to strive to set the kind of example for students that will serve them well in their own conduct and behavior and subsequently contribute to an appropriate school atmosphere.

To that end, in dress, conduct, and interpersonal relationships, all employees should recognize that they are being continuously observed by students and that their actions and demeanor will be reflected in the conduct of students.

The personal life of any employee will be the concern of and warrant the attention of the board only as it may directly prevent the employee from effectively performing assigned functions during duty hours or as it violates local, state, or federal law or contractual agreements.

Immoral conduct on the part of any employee will constitute grounds for immediate suspension. No employee will commit or attempt to induce students or others to commit an act or acts of immoral conduct which may be harmful to others or bring discredit to the district. If it appears an employee may have violated the law, the district will cooperate with law enforcement agencies.

Employees of the district, while on duty and in the presence of students, will not use profanity, will not use tobacco in any form and will not consume or be under the influence of intoxicating beverages. Employees will not be involved in drug abuse or drug traffic.

Violations of this policy by employees may be grounds for immediate suspension and possible termination of employment. In such cases, an employee will be informed of his/her right to any hearing or due process procedure that may be applicable under law or district policy.

The following list includes some of the actions that are considered misconduct while on duty or off district premises.

- Possessing, using manufacturing, distributing, or dispensing any illegal drugs or alcohol while on duty on or off district property;
- Fighting or deliberately harming another;
- Being absent without approval of supervisor;
- Refusing to follow a supervisor's instructions and directions;
- Failure to adhere to safety and health rules as established by state law and the district;
- Destroying school property intentionally;
- Using obscene language which is unsuitable in the school setting;
- Having any interaction/activity of a sexual nature or intent with a student;
- Possessing weapons on school property;
- Using school property without proper authorization;
- Behaving in any inappropriate manner to the extent of adversely affecting the employee's ability to perform his/her work.

See Policy GAMB Employee Conduct.

Arrest of an Employee

The board delegates specific authority to the superintendent to take appropriate employment action with regard to an employee who has been arrested.

- Employees arrested for a misdemeanor offense which would indicate no danger or appearance of danger to students, co-employees, or the district will normally not be subject to any employment action.
- Employees arrested for a misdemeanor offense which would indicate a possible danger or appearance of danger to the school district, co-employees, or to students will normally be suspended with pay pending adjudication.
- Employees arrested for a misdemeanor offense which would indicate a possible danger or appearance of danger to students but not to the school district or co-employees will normally be reassigned to different responsibilities away from students within the district pending adjudication.
- Employees arrested for a felony offense will normally be suspended with pay pending adjudication.
- In certain circumstances, other employment action may be taken.

See Policy GAMB Employee Conduct.

Employees are required to notify the district within 24 hours if they are arrested for any reason.

Cell Phones, Pagers, Communication Devices

During the school day (between 7:30 a.m. and 3:15 p.m.) at all times when students are present, an employee should have her/his cell phone turned off. The purpose of this rule is to protect instructional time and to model appropriate behavior for students.

It is permissible for an employee to make or receive calls at times when students are not present such as a planning period. An employee should direct anyone who needs to contact her/him during the school day to call the school office.

An employee, such as an administrator, who is provided a cell phone by the district as a part of her/his job responsibilities, should keep her/his phone on vibrate when in any instructional setting. He/She should always model appropriate phone behavior for students and other employees.

Dress Code

District employees are expected to use good judgment and to be dressed and groomed in accordance with accepted professional standards for their particular positions and duties. Appearance has a positive effect on student achievement and behavior and influences a student's perception of his/her teachers and other school district employees. Appropriate employee dress communicates to students, parents/legal guardians and the public a sense of pride and respect and the seriousness of education professionals.

The district has developed an employee dress code reflecting minimal requirements for employees, both in schools and at other district sites. District employees should, as a minimum, dress in a manner that meets the rules of the Student Dress Code, JICA-R. Chief building or department administrators have the authority to set

standards for their site or department that go beyond these minimal requirements. Employees requiring modification of the dress code (e.g. footwear) for medical reasons will be accommodated with a doctor's statement supporting the modification.

In the interest of establishing a professional image to model appropriate dress and grooming for those whom we serve, the following guidelines will be observed:

- Clothing cannot be overly tight, low cut, or show cleavage.
- Clothing must cover the waist, shoulders and back with no skin showing between the top garment and bottom garment.
- Sleeveless attire cannot reveal undergarments.

Unacceptable attire for employees includes the following:

- Frayed, torn and/or extremely faded pants/jeans
- Excessively form fitting clothing
- Exercise clothing
- Flip-flop or beach style shoes (soft bottoms)
- Halter tops
- Leggings or yoga pants
- Overalls
- Sheer clothing
- Shorts (any type)
- Spaghetti straps
- Sweat suits
- Wind/jogging suits (except for physical education instructors)
- Visible body piercings other than ears

Tattoos that display inappropriate language or images, as described in the Student Dress Code JCDB-R, should be covered.

Employees working in special areas, such as career technology, technology, physical education, special education, transportation, nursing, food services, and maintenance should dress as needed for their work as approved by the chief building or department administrator. Uniformed employees will wear the uniform prescribed for their respective jobs. Uniforms should conform to the dress code.

Individuals working in schools (e.g. college students and volunteers) should meet the dress code requirements for employees.

The district will observe district/school spirit day each Friday. Employees may wear "professionally appropriate" jeans along with a district or school logo shirt. Employees who do not wear a logo shirt must wear a collared shirt.

Other exceptions to the dress code can be made at the discretion of the chief building administrator in appropriate circumstances (i.e. Spirit Day, Field Day, field trips, etc.).

See Policy GAMB Employee Conduct.

Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace

No employee will unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess or use any drugs, on or in the workplace.

- "Drug" means any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana or any other controlled substance as defined by the act and regulation cited below.
- "Workplace" means the site for the performance of work done, in particular any work site, in connection with a federal grant. That includes any school building or any school premises and any school-owned vehicle or any other school-approved vehicles used to transport students to and from school or school activities. It also includes off-school property, during any school-sponsored or school-approved activity, event or function such as a field trip or athletic event, where students are under the jurisdiction of the school district where work on a federal grant is performed.

As a condition of employment, regardless of funding source, each employee will notify his or her supervisor of his or her conviction of any criminal drug statute for a violation occurring in the workplace as defined above.

As a condition of employment for all employees, as well as each employee engaged in the performance of a federal grant, each must abide by the terms of the school district policy respecting a drug-free workplace.

Any employee who appears to be under the influence of a controlled substance or alcohol in such a way that would adversely affect the performance of his/her duties or the image of the district as his/her employer will be immediately suspended pending appropriate disciplinary action.

The superintendent may revoke a suspension for substance abuse if the employee submits proof that he/she has arranged to receive professional help for substance abuse by enrolling in a rehabilitation program. The district will, at the discretion of the superintendent, allow an employee to use sick leave during the time he/she is absent for treatment.

An employee who violates the terms of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to non-renewal, suspension, or termination at the discretion of the board.

Employee ID Cards

All employees will be issued district identification (ID) cards. Each employee must wear his/her current year ID in a visible location at all times. Charge for replacement of an ID card is \$5.00. *If any employee loses an ID card, he/she should notify Tina Stewart at Central Services (864-397-1000) immediately.*

District employees will be admitted free to all regular season athletic events held at the district's middle and high schools upon display of their current district picture ID at the designated gates. Admission is not transferable and is intended only for the employee. The privilege does not apply to pre-season jamborees or to play-off games.

Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying

The board prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying of a student by students, staff, and third parties that interfere with or disrupt a student's ability to learn and the school's responsibility to educate its students in a safe and orderly environment whether in a classroom, on school premises, on a school bus or other school-related vehicle, at an official school bus stop, at a school-sponsored activity or event whether or not it is held on school premises, or at another program or function where the school is responsible for the student.

For purposes of this policy, harassment, intimidation or bullying is defined as a gesture, electronic communication, or a written, verbal, physical or sexual act reasonably perceived to have the effect of either of the following:

- Harming a student physically or emotionally or damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of personal harm or property damage
- Insulting or demeaning a student or group of students causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school

Any student who feels he/she has been subjected to harassment, intimidation or bullying is encouraged to file a complaint in accordance with procedures established by the superintendent. Complaints will be investigated promptly, thoroughly and confidentially. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the principal or his/her designee. Reports by students or employees may be made anonymously.

The district prohibits retaliation or reprisal in any form against a student or employee who has filed a complaint or report of harassment, intimidation or bullying. The district also prohibits any person from falsely accusing another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying.

The board expects students to conduct themselves in an orderly, courteous, dignified and respectful manner. Students and employees have a responsibility to know and respect the policies, rules and regulations of the school and district. Any student or employee who is found to have engaged in the prohibited actions as outlined in this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion in the case of a student or termination in the case of an employee. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials. The district will take all other appropriate steps to correct or rectify the situation.

The superintendent will be responsible for ensuring notice of this policy is provided to students, staff, parents/legal guardians, volunteers and members of the community including its applicability to all school environments as outlined in this policy. The superintendent will also ensure that a process is established for discussing the district policy with students.

See Policy JICFAA Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying.

Sexual Discrimination and Harassment

What are your rights?

- Sexual harassment of any kind violates the Civil Rights Act (Title VII Civil Rights Act of 1964/Civil Rights Act of 1991). We will not permit or ignore sexual harassment in this workplace. We are committed to providing a workplace free of sexual harassment in any form. Violations will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action and possible termination of employment.

What is sexual harassment?

- Any demand or sexual inference connected with your job is considered sexual harassment. Verbal or non-verbal sexual innuendos, suggestive comments, threats, insults, jokes about specific traits, sexual propositions, suggestive or insulting noises, obscene gestures, physical body contact, or coercing for any sexual activity are examples.
- Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome sexual advances or request for sexual favors as a term or condition of an individual's employment, or when this conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions. Furthermore, when such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance creating an intimidating, hostile, and an offensive working environment, it is not permitted. The above actions are in no way the exclusive means by which sexual harassment can occur. They are merely non-exhaustive examples of potentially prohibited conduct.

What should you do?

- Do not wait to file a complaint. Report any acts from a supervisor, co-worker, or student that affect or interfere with your position in our workplace directly to the supervisor for sexual harassment complaints. If the person you are reporting is the supervisor for sexual harassment complaints, then contact that supervisor's supervisor to file the harassment charge.
- All such complaints will be both thoroughly and quickly investigated in a confidential and non-biased manner regardless of whether it involves a co-worker, supervisor, or student. We protect the rights of those individuals who bring and investigate sexual harassment complaints. We will also protect those individuals against any acts of retaliation if they pursue the complaints of sexual harassment.

Tobacco-Free Workplace

The school board of trustees prohibits the use of tobacco products (smoking, chewing, e-cigarettes, and dipping) in all school buildings and school grounds and on buses. The board directs the administration to ensure that signs designating the message of this policy be conspicuously displayed on all campuses.

An employee who violates the terms of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to non-renewal, suspension, or termination at the discretion of the board.

See Policy GAN Tobacco-Free Facilities Possession and Use of Tobacco.

Personnel Grievance Procedure

In the interest of effective personnel management, the board recognizes the necessity for a procedure providing prompt and effective means of resolving differences that may arise among employees and between employees and administrators. Such procedures shall be available to all employees of the board regardless of membership in any recognized professional organization.

A grievance shall be defined as “a disagreement involving the work situation in which an individual or group of individuals believes that an injustice has been done because of a lack of policy, or because of a policy that is unfair, deviation from, or misapplication of interpretation of a policy or contract.” The development of a new salary schedule, for example, is not a grievance.

The purpose of this procedure is to settle personnel grievances and complaints at a level as close as possible to their point of origin.

Proceedings should be kept informal and confidential, whenever possible, with the objective of resolving the matter at the lowest possible administrative level. It is important that grievances be settled as quickly as possible; therefore, *there will be no extension of the prescribed time for moving through the grievance procedure, except upon a compelling showing of good cause.* All appeals for such an extension of time will be up to the superintendent whose decision will be final.

Level One

Step 1: Any employee having a grievance shall first orally review or discuss such grievance with his/her immediate supervisor. This will occur within 10 working days after the event/action which results in the grievance.

Step 2: If discussion at Step 1 does not resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the employee, such employee shall have the right to present the grievance, in writing, to his/her immediate supervisor. This must be done within ten (10) days after completing Step 1 above. Failure to do so shall mean that the grievance no longer exists. The written grievance shall consist of a concise statement of the facts upon which the grievance is based and a reference to the specific provision of the contract, policy, rule, or regulation in question. A copy of such grievance shall be filed with the superintendent. The employee shall have the right to include in the appeal a request for a hearing before his/her immediate supervisor. Such hearing shall be conducted within five (5) working days after the immediate supervisor's receipt of such request, and the aggrieved employee shall be advised, in writing, of the time, date, and place of such hearing. The immediate supervisor shall take action on the grievance within five (5) working days after the receipt thereof, or, if a hearing is requested, within five (5) working days after the conclusion of said hearing. The action taken and the reason for the action shall be reduced to writing and copies sent to the grievant and the superintendent.

Level Two

If the decision of the immediate supervisor does not resolve the grievance to the satisfaction of the employee, or if no decision is made within the allotted time, the grievant may appeal, in writing, to the superintendent. Failure to file such appeal within five (5) working days from receipt of the written memorandum of the immediate supervisor's decision shall be deemed as a waiver of the right to appeal. If, in appealing to the superintendent, the grievant requests to be heard by the superintendent, a hearing shall be conducted by the superintendent within five (5) working days after the receipt of the request.

The superintendent shall render a decision on the matter within five (5) working days after receipt of the appeal or if a hearing is requested, within five (5) working days after the conclusion of said hearing. The decision and the reasons therefore shall be reduced to writing and copies sent to the grievant and the building principal/director.

Level Three

If the action taken by the superintendent does not resolve the grievance to the satisfaction of the grievant, he/she may request, in writing, that the superintendent notify the board of trustees of the grievant's wish to be heard by the board. Any such request must include a brief statement of the questions to be presented to the board. Failure to file such a request with the superintendent within five (5) working days after receipt of the superintendent's decision on the grievance shall cause the decision of the superintendent to become the final judgment in the matter.

Upon receiving the grievant's request to be heard by the board, the superintendent will, at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the board, present to the board the grievant's request to be heard together with copies of all correspondence and decisions from Levels One and Two. After examining these materials, the board may or may not grant the request. Written notice of the board's decision on whether to grant the request shall be rendered within forty-five (45) calendar days of the board's receipt of the request. If the board decides to hear the matter, the grievant will be given written notice of the time, date, and place of such a hearing. Copies of the board's decision shall be sent to the grievant, superintendent, and building principal/director.

General Provisions

1. All notices to be given under this procedure by the district administration should be served by registered mail, return receipt requested.
2. The grievant may be represented at Levels One and Two by a colleague or friend also employed by the district. At Level Three, the grievant may be represented by legal counsel. Such a counselor must be admitted to the practice of law in South Carolina and a member, in good standing, of the South Carolina State Bar. The district will not provide counsel for the grievant. If the grievant chooses to be represented by legal counsel at Level Three, written notice to the superintendent of that intent must be given no later than fifteen (15) calendar days prior to the scheduled date of the hearing before the board. Failure to give such notice could result in postponement of the hearing.
3. No person shall be the object of administrative reprisal, sanction, or penalty of any kind for either activating or participating in the grievance procedure.

4. The procedure described herein shall be adhered to in processing both student and employee complaints under Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 (Sex Discrimination).

See Policy GAE Grievances.

COMPENSATION AND PAYROLL

Salary and Hourly Rate Compensation Schedules

The salary of each professional employee shall be set forth each year by the board of trustees. By South Carolina law salaries cannot be lower than the state salary schedule, a schedule based on degrees and years of experience.

Hourly rates for classified/support staff shall be set forth each year by the board of trustees.

Salary schedules for the current year are posted [on the SDPC website](#) under Human Resources and in the *Staff Portal*.

Payroll Schedule

All payrolls are annualized and paid out evenly over the course of a school year.

- Annual salaries for employees who work 220+ days are paid from July to June.
- Annual salaries for employees who work less than 220 days are paid from September to August.

Payment is on a 12-month basis (1/24 of salary twice each month).

All employees, including substitute teachers, are paid twice each month on the 15th day of the month and on the last day of the month. If those dates fall on a weekend or holiday, employees are paid on the last scheduled work day prior to the weekend or holiday.

Payroll

Employees will have earnings directly deposited into their bank accounts. Direct deposits are electronically transferred and are available to employees on the scheduled pay dates.

The district is required to send a test “pre-note” to the employee’s bank to validate the account and routing info before money is actively transmitted. The employee will receive a “live” payroll check during this process.

Unless the employee hears from us otherwise, the next payroll check will be deposited directly into the bank account(s).

Initial Payroll

Initial payroll each year is September 15. After an employee reports to work, the first payroll will be made without regard to absences. The second check will reflect absences incurred from the first day of work through the end of the initial payroll period.

Fair Labor Standards

The FLSA ([Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938](#)) is a federal law that protects the rights and wages of covered employees. FLSA ensures that an employee is paid wages for all hours worked and is paid for all overtime hours. In addition, SDPC Board Policy GCRD addresses overtime of classified employees.

Time Sheets

Each classified, non-exempt employee is required to complete a timesheet daily. Failure to maintain or falsification of such records may be grounds for disciplinary action. A [time sheet template](#) can be downloaded from the district website. Beginning this year, SDPC will be using RAPTOR as an electronic timesheet.

The time sheet must reflect the **actual days and actual times** the employee reports to work and leaves for the day. If leaving the campus during the day, the employee should sign out when leaving and should sign in upon return.

Supervisors must sign off on the timesheet weekly.

Compensatory Time/Overtime

Any overtime must be approved by the supervisor **in advance** and must be reflected on the timesheet. Overtime is determined as hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a work week.

Employees who work more than 8 hours in a day may take an hour during the work week to stay within the 40 hour work week. If an employee works more than 40 hours in a work week, compensatory (comp) time must be given.

Comp time is given at a rate of 1.5 hours for each hour worked over 40. Employees who have earned comp time should take the time within the week it is earned. If that is not possible, comp time should be used within a reasonable period – two to four weeks.

According to board policy, an employee may not accrue comp time in excess of 80 hours -- **53 overtime hours**. Comp time may not be carried from one fiscal year to the next without approval from the superintendent/designee.

Pay for comp time must be approved by the superintendent/designee **in advance** of the time being worked.

An employee may not volunteer to work overtime without compensation of either time or pay without a written request and approval from the superintendent/designee.

Payment for Extra Work

A supervisor or department head must approve extra work and will submit an extra pay form to payroll. The extra pay will be included with an employee's regular payroll check, but it will be taxed separately.

Exemptions

Anytime an employee's number of exemptions changes, he/she should file a new Federal Tax Form W-4 with Human Resource Services so that changes can be made on payroll deductions.

Salary Adjustments and Corrections | DJCA

The district accepts the responsibility and authority for making corrections in erroneous salary payments.

Adjustments shall cover no more than one complete fiscal year prior to the year in which the error is discovered.

EVALUATION OF CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL

All of our classified employees impact the educational environment of the School District of Pickens County. They are an integral part of the team that controls the educational environment. Our district believes that the educational environment affects learning.

Employees need to understand their role in creating and maintaining a positive school climate. Job descriptions should reflect the minimum expectations and essential functions of the employee from the district.

The purpose of the evaluation is twofold. First, it serves as a reflection of performance against the expectations of the job. A job description outlines these expectations. The review will serve as an opportunity to communicate achievement of job expectations, and provide a basis to determine continued employment. Second, the evaluation contains recommendations for self-improvement.

One of the major benefits of a personnel evaluation is to provide feedback of one's performance so the employee can develop to one's potential. This provides the opportunity for success and fulfillment. An improvement plan should be developed for each employee and can be revised or updated at least once yearly. The principal/ supervisor should address the employee's area(s) needing improvement and assist the person with specific recommendations and support to attain an acceptable level of performance. If an employee does not demonstrate satisfactory improvement, termination could proceed. Individual improvement plans should be condensed to serve as a basis for developing and scheduling staff development/ growth activities as well as individual activities. Hence, the primary goal of the evaluation process is to promote job performance through growth and development.

The evaluation of each classified employee should utilize the *Performance Evaluation for Classified Personnel* and be completed no later than June 30.

Process

- The introduction of the evaluation instrument should occur during the employment orientation. The job description is reviewed with the evaluation instrument. As job descriptions are revised, they should be reviewed and signed by the affected employee.
- The evaluator must utilize information that covers the entire performance period being evaluated. The data needs to represent a complete picture and not reflect segments of an employee's performance the evaluator wants to highlight.

- The evaluator will have the final responsibility and authority to complete the Annual Conference Review. A copy of the final evaluation should be sent to Human Resource Services to be placed in the employee's personnel record.
- The post-conference should be an open discussion of the employee's performance. The employee should sign the final Performance Evaluation instrument, along with the principal/supervisor. The employee's signature only acknowledges that he/she has reviewed the evaluation. It does not mean that the employee agrees or disagrees with the evaluation.

Instrument

- The *Performance Evaluation for Classified Employees* evaluates work characteristics and job-related tasks. The instrument is divided into three areas: work habits, job performance, and professional responsibilities.
- The evaluator will assess each area as M (Meets Standards) or NI (Needs Improvement). The principal/supervisor or his/her designee will complete the evaluation.
- The Standards should identify specific skill areas outlined in the job description. Only those skill areas identified as Needs Improvement should be listed.

Implementation

- The *Performance Evaluation* should be completed for every classified employee during the first year of employment and at a minimum of every third year.
- During any subsequent year of employment, if an employee has areas of unsatisfactory performance, the *Performance Evaluation* and an Improvement Plan should be completed before June 30 of each year.

ABSENCES AND LEAVE

Notification of Principal/Supervisor

When an employee must be absent from school for any reason, he/she must notify the principal, in advance, and seek approval. The employee should then enter the absence in AESOP and follow procedures for securing a substitute, if needed. All absences, whether a substitute is needed or not, must be entered in AESOP. However, entering an absence into AESOP does not equal or guarantee approval. [Instructions for using AESOP](#) are located in the *Staff Portal* section of the website.

Personal Leave

Employees should refrain from requesting personal (annual) leave on the last day or the first day after a holiday or on the first or last day of school, except in extenuating circumstances and with the approval of your immediate supervisor.

Advanced Annual Leave

Advanced annual leave will be granted yearly to all full-time professional personnel. Full-time professional personnel are defined as persons employed under contract in positions for which licensure is required by the South Carolina Department of Education and who are employed for a minimum of five (5) months and work thirty (30) hours per week.

1¼ days of annual leave will be advanced for each month of active service at no reduction in salary. Nine-month employees will receive 12 days annually; ten-month employees will receive 13 days annually; eleven-month employees will receive 14 days annually; and twelve-month employees will receive 15 days annually.

Annual leave may be taken for any reason deemed important by the employee (e.g., personal business, death in the family, sickness, etc.) with the approval of the immediate supervisor.

Annual leave for the year will be granted on the first day that the employee reports to work of each fiscal year (July 1 through June 30). If, however, employment terminates prior to the employment period, or if employment begins during the employment period as outlined above, leave entitlement will be prorated according to the number of months the employee worked and in accordance with the allocation shown.

Cumulative Leave (Policy GBRIB)

Employees who have retired under the South Carolina Retirement System, except for employees who TERI, are not eligible for cumulative leave. At the conclusion of each fiscal year, annual leave days not used will be

classified as cumulative leave and may accrue to a maximum of 135 days, excluding the current year's allocation of advanced annual leave.

Cumulative leave in excess of forty-five (45) days can be taken with no deduction in salary, but only for the employee's illness or otherwise in accord with the Family Medical Leave Act..

Cumulative annual leave in excess of three consecutive days for reasons other than bona fide personal illness or otherwise in accord with the Family Medical Leave Act (e.g., out of town trips) will not be granted more often than once in each three-year period.

During the first five days of student attendance in the school term, the last five days of student attendance in the school term, just prior to or immediately following district holidays, and on designated in-service education or staff development days, an employee may take leave only for personal illness, family illness, or death in the family. In case of other verifiable, extenuating circumstances, the superintendent or his/her designee may grant annual leave during the above periods. The employee must secure written permission from his/her principal or supervisor prior to requesting an exception from this provision.

An employee returning from an extended leave of multiple days due to his/her personal illness must present a statement from his/her healthcare provider certifying the employee's ability to return to a normal work schedule with or without reasonable accommodation prior to his/her return.

When the employee makes a request in writing, the superintendent or his/her designee may grant an employee leave without pay for personal illness following the exhaustion of all annual leave. If an employee has less than 91 days of accumulated annual leave, leave with and without pay will not exceed 91 work days in any school year without special authorization from the superintendent or his/her designee and is not to extend beyond the immediate school year.

Procedures for Using Advanced Annual or Cumulative Leave

A request for either advanced annual or cumulative annual leave must be made to the employee's immediate supervisor. This request should be submitted in advance through AESOP.

Bonus for Unused Leave

An employee may receive a bonus at the end of the school year for unused days of earned advanced annual leave once he/she has accrued 135 days cumulative leave. The bonus will be at the rate of \$50 per day.

Retirement or Separation Annual Leave Payout

All full-time employees who separates from employment or retires from the School District of Pickens County, including those who exit the Teacher and Employee Retention Incentive (TERI) retirement program, may receive payment for accumulated but unused annual leave, which has been earned while employed in the School District of Pickens County, up to 45 days, in the following manner:

An employee will be eligible for retirement or separation pay from the district and will receive their daily rate of pay based on the current year's salary schedule full pay for each day of cumulative annual leave not taken, not to exceed 45 days, provided he/she meets one of the following requirements.

- An employee retiring after 28 years of service, or upon reaching the age of 62, provided that the employee has a minimum of 10 years' service in the district, or
- A person with annual leave earned while employed in the School District of Pickens County may receive payment for 45 days, upon separation from employ or upon exiting the TERI retirement program.

All employees (classified and certified) who have been employed by the district for a minimum of four consecutive school years will be eligible to receive this bonus for annual leave days. The schedule for pay rate for people leaving or separating from the district will be in the following manner:

- Year 4-10: \$50.00 a day up to 45 days
- Year 11-15: \$75.00 a day up to 45 days
- Year 16-20: \$100.00 a day up to 45 days
- Year 20 plus: Daily Rate of Pay up to 45 days or the minimum of \$100 a day, whichever is greater

The daily rate of pay is based on the current year's salary schedule for each day of cumulative annual leave not taken.

Prior to separation from employment or retirement from the district, an employee must decide how he/she would like his/her accumulated leave handled; i.e., whether to receive payment for leave eligible for payment per district policy, transfer all of the leave to another state agency or school district, allow the leave to remain with the district for the employee to transfer at a later date or to use if re-employed at a later date or some combination of the options.

Once an employee elects to receive his/her leave payment, he/she will not be able to transfer any annual leave days for which payment is received to another school district or eligible state agency.

In his/her lifetime, no employee will receive payment for more than 45 days, which has been earned and accumulated while in the employ of the district.

If an employee receives payment for days of annual leave earned and accumulated while in the employ of the district in an amount less than the maximum of 45 days, the employee may receive additional payments for leave accumulated to the extent that the payment does not exceed the lifetime aggregate maximum total of 45 days.

Request for Bonuses for Leave Not Taken

For an employee to receive pay for either unused advanced annual leave and/or cumulative annual leave days he/she must complete the appropriate form which is available in each school office. This form should be

returned to the employee's immediate supervisor not later than the last day of the employment period. Additionally, employees who breach their contract of employment with the district or who are terminated for "just cause" will not be eligible to receive any payment for accumulated but unused leave.

Transfer of Leave

An employee who is new to the district may transfer any sick leave, up to a maximum of one hundred thirty five (135) days, accumulated under his/her immediate employment in a South Carolina school district or state agency provided such leave is certified by the district/agency in which the leave was earned.

Also, upon a written request of an employee or former employee, any accumulated leave up to a maximum of one hundred thirty-five (135) days shall be transferred from the School District of Pickens County to any school district in the state depending on how many days the receiving district allows you to transfer. Most district allow an employee to only transfer 90 days.

Termination

The district may terminate the employment of any employee who fails to comply with the requirements of this policy (GBRIB) and accompanying administrative rule, who fails to report to work at the expiration of authorized leave or who fails to obtain an extension of previously approved leave. An employee is also subject to termination from employment with the district for misstatements of fact and/or misrepresentations of purpose for which leave of absence is desired or on the basis of which annual leave is obtained.

The district will not terminate from employment those employees under this policy who have accrued annual leave and who are using it in compliance with this policy. The district will not terminate from employment any employee during a continuing leave of less than 91 work days, provided none of the aforementioned grounds for termination are present.

School Duty | GBRH

For absences resulting from assignment of duty by school authorities, the teacher will receive full pay.

Pay Deductions | GAD-R

Full pay will be deducted from the salaries of certified employees who fail to attend district in-service activities without prior approval from the superintendent. However, provisions for sick leave and death in the immediate family apply to in-service activities.

Sabbatical Leave | GBRH-A

The board of trustees may grant sabbatical leave with part pay to certified personnel under the following conditions:

1. The employee must have completed seven (7) continuous years of satisfactory service to the school district. A formal written request for sabbatical leave must be in the office of Human Resource Services no later than March 15 of the year preceding the leave.
2. The teacher must be fully certified for the position held.
3. The program of studies approved by the college or university that will be attended must be approved by the superintendent.
4. The board of trustees must be satisfied that the leave will accrue to the benefit of the educational program of the school district.
5. Such leave may be granted for up to a full school year and the applicant may return to the same or similar position.
6. Sabbatical leave will not be granted for programs that could, in the judgment of the board, be completed without such leave.
7. The teacher must agree to serve under contract with the school district for three (3) contract years after the sabbatical leave. In the event of failure to fulfill the three-year commitment, the teacher will agree to repay the school district the pro-rata share of the compensation corresponding to the unfulfilled commitment. For example, a teacher who does not return to the school district would owe the district the full amount. If the teacher works one year, s/he will owe the district two-thirds of the amount.
8. The superintendent may designate a committee annually to aid him/her in determining whether individual applications for sabbatical leave fulfill the aforementioned conditions.
9. Sabbatical leave can be granted only if a suitable replacement for the applicant can be obtained.
10. Notification of intent to return to work the following year must be given no later than March 15 of the leave year.

Study Leave

The board of trustees may grant study leave for up to one year without pay to personnel who have three (3) continuous years of satisfactory service to the district. Approval of applications for study leave will depend on the availability of a suitable person to fill the vacated position for a period of one (1) year or less. The applicant must also submit confirmation to the board of his/her acceptance as a full-time student in a program of graduate study. The applicant must attend for the year in which the leave of absence is granted.

The request for a contract for the year following leave should be in Human Resource Services by February 1 of the leave year. The employee may be assigned to the same or similar position upon his/her return to the school district. In the event of withdrawal from the program of study for any reason other than medical before the end of the year of leave, the district will no longer hold the position.

Extended Leave | GBRIG

Any employee who is in a full-time position and employed full-time by the district for a minimum of one (1) contract year may be granted a leave of absence without pay or benefits for one full contract year, or the remaining

portion of a contract year, when circumstances warrant, upon written request to the district superintendent and approval by the board of trustees. No such leave will be granted for more than one contract year or for the initial portion of any contract year. Any such request must state the reasons for the requested leave of absence. Leave approvals are within the discretion of the board and may not be made effective unless and until a suitable replacement has been employed within a reasonable period of time, as determined by the district.

Employees will be expected to resume their duties following an approved leave of absence at the beginning of the subsequent contract year, unless the employee's intent not to return is communicated to the district on or before the issuance of contracts for the subsequent school year. If a contract for the subsequent school year has been issued to and signed by the employee, and the employee decides not to return, the employee will be expected to follow board policy with regard to being released from the contract.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

FMLA requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to "eligible" employees for certain family and medical reasons. Employees are eligible if they have worked for a covered employer for at least one year, and for 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months, and if there are at least 50 employees within 75 miles.

Please contact the district's Leave Administrator for specific details and procedures.

Reasons for taking leave

Unpaid leave must be granted for any of the following reasons:

- the birth and first-year care of a child;
- the adoption or foster placement of a child;
- the serious illness of an employee's spouse, parent, or child; and
- the employee's own serious health condition that keeps the employee from performing the essential functions of her/his job.
- military leave.

At the employee's or employer's option, certain kinds of paid leave may be substituted for unpaid leave.

Advance Notice and Medical Certification

The employee may be required to provide advance leave notice and medical certification. Taking of leave may be denied if requirements are not met. Employees will be expected to resume their duties following an approved leave of absence at the beginning of the subsequent contract year, unless the employee's intent not to return is communicated to the district on or before the issuance of contracts for the subsequent school year. If a contract for the subsequent school year has been issued to and signed by the employee, the employee will be expected to follow board policy with regard to being released from the contract.

The employee ordinarily must provide 30 days prior notice when the leave is "foreseeable."

An employer may require medical certification to support a request for leave because of a serious health condition, and may require second or third opinions (at the employer's expense) and a fitness for duty report to return to work.

Job benefits and protection

- For the duration of FMLA leave, the employer must maintain the employee's health coverage under any "group health plan."
- Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms.
- The use of FMLA leave cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an employee's leave.

Unlawful acts by employers

FMLA makes it unlawful for any employer to

- interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right provided under FMLA;
- discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to FMLA.

Enforcement

- The U.S. Department of Labor is authorized to investigate and resolve complaints of violations;
- An eligible employee may bring a civil action suit against an employer for violations.

FMLA does not affect any federal or state law prohibiting discrimination, or supersede any state or local law or collective bargaining agreement which provides greater family or medical leave rights.

BENEFITS

Eligible employees of the School District of Pickens County are offered an extensive benefits package. The package offered through the state includes health, dental, life, disability, vision, and long-term care plans as well as group rates for a variety of district supplemental programs. Working with the State of South Carolina and various independent agencies, the School District of Pickens County offers these programs to provide comprehensive coverage.

Listed below are some of the benefits district employees are offered.

Health Plans

- Health plan options include Savings Health Plan, Standard Health Plan, and Tri-Care. A comparison guide, updated annually, is available on the benefits Web page.

Dental Plans

- The regular State Dental Plan is available to employees. The option of Dental Plus for additional coverage and premium is also offered.

Basic Life Insurance and Basic Long-Term Disability

- Basic life insurance as well as basic long-term disability insurance is provided free of charge to employees when they elect a health plan.

Additional Life and Disability Plans

- Optional life, dependent life child, dependent life spouse, and supplemental long-term disability are available.

Vision

- Vision is a new plan offered through the state as of January 2010.

MoneyPlu\$

- Some of the above benefits such as health, dental, optional life, and vision can be pre-taxed if an employee elects to have the pre-tax premium feature. Additional MoneyPlu\$ accounts are available and can even help reduce the monthly amount paid for dependent childcare and medical expenses. With the state's flexible benefits program MoneyPlu\$, an employee can deduct thousands of dollars annually from his/her pre-tax earnings, saving hundreds of dollars each year.

Eligibility

To be eligible for all benefits listed above, an employee must meet one of the following requirements:

- Must be permanent/full time employees who works at least 30 hours per week
- Part-time teachers (rates are different)
 - .4 & .5 positions Working 15-19 hours per week
 - .6 position Working 20-24 hours per week

- .7 position Working 25-29 hours per week
- Rehired retirees
- Spouse and ex-spouse by court order
- Have a specified licensure for professional position
- Children up to age 26 or on approved incapacitation.
- Any employee serving in a variable/temporary position pending the Affordable Care Act measurement period for Oct. 3 through Oct. 4 of the following year. Changes effective January 1, 2015.

Enrollment and Effective Date

Employees may enroll within 31 days from hire date, 31 days from qualifying event, or during an open enrollment period. Generally, the effective date is the first of the following month after hire date. Dates may vary for certain situations

Discount Programs

Additional discount programs are also available to state employees. For more information go to www.SouthCarolinaBlues.com – District-Approved Optional/Supplemental Benefits. These optional benefits programs supplement the State Group Insurance Plan, and they include short-term disability policies, additional life policies, additional accidental policies, and additional cancer policies.

Key Man Life Insurance

The board of trustees provides a life insurance plan for full-time employees at no cost to the employees. Coverage levels vary according to classification. For example, a teacher's benefit is \$25,000, and a classified employee's benefit is \$10,000.

Retirement

All newly hired state employees must elect membership in the South Carolina Retirement System (SCRS) defined benefit plan or the State Optional Retirement Program (State ORP) defined contribution plan. Regardless of the plan selected, an employee contributes a tax-deferred 8.66% of gross pay into his/her retirement account. The employer – the School District of Pickens County – contributes a percentage as well.

Retirement accounts of SCRS members who have not retired earn 4 % interest compounded annually. State ORP members' account balances are based solely on their contributions and performance of the investments selected.

Retirement contribution is optional only if the employee is exempted by statute. For example, a school bus driver can be exempt from contributions. Additional information is available regarding non-membership through the benefits specialists.

Extensive changes are continually being made to the South Carolina Retirement System. See the [Public Employee Benefits Authority website](#) for more info.

Retirement Group Life Insurance

If the death of an employee occurs, and the employee is enrolled in one of the SCRS's retirement plan's, a benefit equal to your annual salary is payable in a lump sum.

Additional Retirement Options

Tax-deferred annuity programs such as 403B's, 457's, and a 401K through South Carolina Deferred Comp are available. For vendor names and phone numbers, please view the district's approved vendor list on the benefits Web page.

Workers' Compensation

SDPC carries workers' compensation on all employees. Workers' compensation provides benefits to an employee who suffers an injury or illness arising out of an injury in the course of his/her employment. The benefits include medical expenses, and, in case of disability, protection against total loss of income. Payments and decisions are made at the sole discretion of our current workers' compensation carrier.

If an accident involving school personnel occurs on school property during school hours, the accident should be reported to the principal within 24 hours. Additionally, a *First Report of Injury and Incident* form should be completed and sent to the benefits office at Central Services within 24 hours. The injured person should see an approved doctor immediately and take a *Notice to Provider* form for the doctor to complete. A list of approved doctors is available in the main office of each location. The list is also available through the benefits office.

Any injury, disease, or death which is not job-related will not be covered under workers' compensation.

Educator's Professional Liability Program

The increasing complexity and stresses of today's society make adequate professional liability one of the most important insurance programs a district can provide. Each teacher is covered by a professional liability insurance policy that the School District of Pickens County has with the State of South Carolina Budget and Control Board, Division of General Services. The policy agrees to pay up to the policy limit, which an educator may become legally obligated to pay as a result of any claim. The limit of the policy's liability for personal injury and/or property damage for each occurrence or event is \$1,000,000.00.

If a student suffers injury and the employee feels action may be brought against him/her, the employee should inform the principal and ask that he/she have Central Services notify the company.

Student Accident Insurance

Employees are allowed to purchase the accident insurance available for students. The policy provides accident coverage during school time, and for additional cost, provides 12-month, 24-hour coverage.

Sick Leave Bank | GBRIBA

The district has an employee-governed sick leave bank for full-time, active duty employees who earn sick leave.

The bank provides additional sick leave for eligible employees who experience a catastrophic illness or accident which results in absence from work which extends beyond the employee's accumulated leave.

Information is available in the *Staff Portal* under [Sick Leave Bank](#).

The Sick Leave Bank policy was revised in June 2015.

TECHNOLOGY USE AND DATA MANAGEMENT

Use of Technology Resources in Instruction | IJNDB

Technology is a vital part of education and the curriculum of the district. In an effort to promote learning and expand educational resources for students, the district has made arrangements to provide access to technology resources contingent upon adherence to this policy, administrative rule and related guidelines. The School District of Pickens County will provide students and employees with access to the district's technology resources including, but not limited to, computer systems, media and peripheral devices.

Access to the district's technological resources is a privilege, not a right. With this privilege, there also is a responsibility to use the resources solely for educational purposes and not to access inappropriate materials unsuitable for students. The district's technology resources have specific educational purposes that include use for classroom activities, professional or career development and administrative functions. The faculty will thoughtfully integrate use of technology throughout the curriculum and will provide guidance and instruction to students in its use.

Use of the district's technology resources is a privilege and is not intended to be a public forum. Employee and student Internet activities will be monitored by the district to ensure employees and students are not accessing inappropriate sites that have visual depictions that include obscenity, child pornography or are harmful to minors. The district will use technology protection measures to protect students from inappropriate access.

The district will communicate its technology acceptable use policy, administrative regulations and Internet safety measures annually through the student/parent handbook.

District and school computer technicians who are working with a computer and come across sexually explicit images of children must report this to local law enforcement and to the superintendent. The report must include the name and address of the owner or person in possession of the computer. Employees and students who violate the terms of the administrative rule related to the Internet will be subject to disciplinary action. Inappropriate use by any person will not be tolerated.

The School District of Pickens County will develop and implement administrative rules and regulations and user guidelines related to technological resources that are consistent with the purposes and mission of the district.

Use of Technology Resources in Instruction (Internet) | IJNDB-R(1)

Terms and conditions of use

Acceptable use

The purpose of the district decision to provide Internet access is to allow an expanded opportunity for research and education by providing access to unique resources and the opportunity for collaborative work. All use of the Internet must be in support of education and research and consistent with the educational objectives of the district. Use of other organizations' network or computing resources must comply with the rules appropriate for that network. Transmission of any material in violation of any national or state laws or regulations is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material or material protected by trade secret.

Procedures for use

Administrators and teachers may access the Internet for educational or work-related purposes at any time which is not disruptive and does not interfere with the performance of other responsibilities by the employee or other staff members.

Students will be allowed to access the Internet only through their teachers. No students may access the Internet without permission. Student use must be supervised at all times by a staff member.

Rules governing use

The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in cancellation of Internet privileges. All staff and students, when allowed use of the Internet and email, must abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette, including the following:

- Be polite. Do not be abusive in communication to others. Always use appropriate language. Profanity, vulgarities or other inappropriate language is prohibited. Illegal activities are strictly forbidden.
- Never reveal the personal address or phone number of the user or others.
- Note that electronic mail is not guaranteed to be private. People who operate the system have access to all mail. Messages relating to or in support of illegal or inappropriate activities will be reported to the appropriate authorities.
- Do not disrupt, harass or annoy other users.
- All communications and information accessible via the network should be assumed to be private property. Always cite all quotes, references and sources.
- Never access inappropriate or restricted information, such as pornography or other obscene materials, or other information not directly related to the educational purposes for which access is being provided. Restricted information includes obscene, libelous, indecent, vulgar, profane

or lewd materials; advertisements for products or services not permitted to minors by law; insulting, fighting and harassing words; and other materials which may cause a substantial disruption of the academic environment.

- Vandalism also is prohibited and will result in cancellation of privileges. Vandalism includes any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user and includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses.
- All users should remain on the system only as long as necessary to complete their work, so that other individuals will have equal opportunities to access the Internet.

- All users should use the Internet only for research and academic reasons; non-academic uses are prohibited. Do not use the system for financial or commercial gain.
- Always follow the instructions of the supervising staff members.

Penalties for improper use Employees

An employee who violates the terms of this administrative rule or otherwise misuses the Internet to access inappropriate material will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. In addition, the privilege of accessing the Internet also will be subject to cancellation for up to one year.

Students

Students who violate the terms of this administrative rule or who otherwise misuse their access to the Internet also will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the district's student behavior code. Internet access privileges also may be canceled for up to one year.

Violations of the laws of the United States or the state of South Carolina also may subject the user to criminal prosecution.

If a user incurs unauthorized costs, the user, as well as the user's parents/legal guardians if the user is a student, will be responsible for all such costs.

Use of Technology Resources in Instruction (Email) | IJNDB-R(2)

E-mail

The School District of Pickens County and the email administrator(s), accountability, information and technology department (AITS) will make reasonable efforts to maintain the integrity and effective operation of AITS electronic mail system (email). E-mail is an important medium for communication. Use of this medium by administration, faculty, staff and students is encouraged for scholarly work-related communication and users are obliged to use this tool in a responsible, effective and lawful manner. Although by AITS nature email seems to be less formal than other written communication, the same laws apply. Therefore, it is important that users are aware of the legal risks of email.

AITS provides and supports "Microsoft Outlook" as the district's email service. No other email service is supported by AITS.

Users are advised that the email system should in no way be regarded as a secure medium for communication of sensitive or confidential information. Because of the nature and technology of electronic communication, the district can assure neither the privacy of an individual user's use of district email resources nor the confidentiality of particular messages that may be created, transmitted, received or stored therein. All emails are retained by the district for archival purposes and may be subject to release pursuant to a subpoena, as well as used in connection with a student or employee disciplinary proceedings. This includes all sent, received and deleted emails. Emails will be retained by the district for a period of two school years, after which they will be deleted from the archival system.

Only district administrators, faculty, staff and students are authorized users of the district email systems and resources.

- All email accounts are to be properly managed.
- All email communication must be handled in the same manner as a letter, fax, memo or other business communications.
- Do not disguise or attempt to disguise your identity when sending email.
- Do not forge or attempt to forge email messages.
- Do not send email messages using another person's email account.
- E-mail messages may not contain content that may be considered offensive or disruptive.
- Employees may not retrieve or read email that was not sent to them unless authorized by their administrator or by the email recipient.
- Forwarding chain letters and solicitations is strictly forbidden.
- No commercial messages or employee solicitations are to be distributed using district email.
- School mailing lists should be used at school, for school purposes only.
- The forwarding of a virus warning is strictly forbidden. Any such warning should be directed to the attention of AITS.

It is strictly prohibited to send or forward emails containing defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks or images. Offensive content includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- obscene or harassing language or images
- racial, ethnic, sexual or gender specific comments or images

Other offensive content may include comments or images that would offend someone on the basis of their religion, political beliefs, sexual orientation, national origin or age. If an email of this nature is received, the user should promptly notify his/her supervisor.

Court order or law enforcement investigation may require the examination and release of any document including electronic files such as email. When a person affiliated in any way with the district is involved, AITS will act only under the specific instructions of human resources and district administrators to ensure that individual rights are protected.

District staff members may, under certain conditions, have email files accessed by others when it is related to departmental functions. A special condition exists for a staff employee who receives email associated with his/her job responsibilities and where, in their absence, the administration or others in the department need to have access to the email. AITS will continue to maintain the privacy of email and may locate and copy specific messages on authorization from the administrator. No person outside of the account holder may review the entire contents of a mailbox without authorization from the appropriate administrator.

E-mail moved by the account holder outside of the district mail systems becomes personal files covered by other policies and procedures. Note that email downloaded to files, using Outlook, Outlook Express, Netscape

Mail or other applications on a personal computer or saved to files on a minicomputer, is covered by other policies and procedures. Those files on a personal computer are outside the system management of the district. Maintenance of email privacy is controlled, at least to a great extent, by permitted access to the personal computer which is the responsibility of the individual.

The district administers AITS email system in a manner consistent with the system's importance for communication and the need for privacy of email messages. In the process of administering the email system, certain members of the staff may have access to the contents of certain email messages. These staff members will exercise their ability to access the contents of email under the strict limitations of the system administration requirements (a "need to know" basis). Furthermore, information about the contents of email obtained by members of the staff as they administer the email system must not be communicated to other members of the staff unless required to administer and support the system and may not be communicated to anyone outside the district without the approval of the appropriate administrator.

Best efforts are made to assure that the email system operates to deliver messages as specified by the sender. Although highly reliable and secure, delivery to district email addresses is not guaranteed. There can be no assurance that the person holding the recipient account actually examines a particular message, nor can confidentiality be absolutely guaranteed. In all these respects, email is no different from conventional mail.

There are no assurances about the handling of email received from or sent to addresses outside the district. Organizations managing email systems elsewhere on the World Wide Web may or may not have similar policies to those described here. Many are known to consider email the property of the organization, subject to examination. Be aware of this possibility when corresponding with others elsewhere on the Web. While AITS may be able to provide some advice, we have no direct influence on the handling of email anywhere outside our local network(s). No other email service is supported by AITS.

The administrators of the district email system may, within certain limits, block mail (including external, unsolicited, bulk email - "spam"). The annoying, potentially resource intensive and sometimes offensive nature of unsolicited bulk email being sent by commercial or quasi-commercial organizations may require district email administrators to block receipt of mail from some locations on the Internet. This blocking action is permitted if justified and where such blocking minimizes the likelihood that legitimate email to district account holders will be blocked as well.

E-mail administrators are not permitted to use the content of the message or of the subject line in the mail heading to block or divert delivery of any message, except to block email containing computer viruses, "spam" or similar destructive content.

The use of each account is the personal responsibility of the account holder and the account holder must maintain password security. E-mail addressed to an account is delivered to a mailbox file that can be accessed through a variety of computer programs under account password control. The account holder is responsible for maintaining strict confidentiality of that password.

E-mail messages are owned by the sender, and upon receipt, the recipient account holder, subject to review by the district as specified herein. AITS also reserves the right to inspect and disclose the contents of email under the following circumstances.

- in the course of an investigation triggered by indications of misconduct or misuse
- as needed to protect the health and safety of students or staff
- as needed to prevent interference with the academic mission
- as needed to locate substantive information required for district business that is not more readily available by some other means

Account holders are expected to manage incoming and outgoing mail in their account. It is the responsibility of the account holders to manage their own email by suitably disposing of mail in the account's mailbox. Managing email also requires account holders to control the automatic delivery of messages from such services as mailing lists (e.g., listserv). Caution should be exercised when subscribing to online mailing lists.

Electronic storage for mailboxes is limited and the email AITS staff must ensure that sufficient space is available for the ongoing delivery of new messages. A maximum permissible mailbox size of 15 MB has been established. When this size is exceeded, a warning message will be issued, stating that 'your mailbox exceeds the limit.' At this point, it is the responsibility of the account holder to prioritize messages by keeping the important ones and deleting the others.

The accumulation of a large volume of mail in an account holder's mailbox may require AITS to take management action. A large volume of unread mail being received by an account can create network and mail performance problems, in addition to storage problems, with no benefit to anyone. In cases where, over a period of a week or longer, an account is receiving a large volume of mail and the account holder is not moving it out of the mailbox, AITS will implement stages of response to safeguard the account holder's mail, protect performance of the email system and help the account holder gain control over the amount of mail being received. These are the response stages.

- AITS will contact the person by phone or conventional mail to alert them to the problem and request that immediate action be taken, offering advice on how to proceed.
- AITS may request permission from the appropriate supervisor to inactivate the account.

Extraordinary action may be required under specific constraints. Certain circumstances may require the email administrator to take extraordinary action in administering the email system, during which time the system may be unavailable. This action could be as a result of such events created by system upgrades or maintenance, system malfunction, malicious actions by an individual, sabotage, virus attack(s) or an act of nature. The email manager must take steps to do the following.

- Protect the functionality of the email system.
- Protect account holders from disruption of their use of the email system.

Extraordinary action taken by AITS to limit an individual's access to the system or to inspect and/or alter the contents of a mailbox is subject to review by the administrative office and/or human resources.

Either printed or electronic copies of email messages that constitute official records are to be retained according to the record retention schedules. Official records that are sent by email are not to be retained through the district's email program.

Although the district email system is intended for academic and/or educational use, personal email is allowed if certain guidelines are followed.

- Incidental and occasional personal use of email is permitted. Such messages become the property of the district and are subject to the same conditions as district email.
- Personal emails must also adhere to the guidelines in this policy and rule.
- Personal emails are not to be composed and/or read during class time.

Certain personal emails not allowed

- attempting unauthorized access to email or attempting to breach any security measures on any email system or attempting to intercept any email transmissions without proper authorization
- conducting personal business
- emails that result in monetary gain or for commercial purposes that are not directly related to the district
- personal emails that create a direct cost for the district
- “spoofing,” i.e., constructing an email communication so it appears to be from someone else
- “snooping,” i.e., obtaining access to the files or email of others for the purpose of satisfying curiosity, with no substantial district business purpose
- use of email systems for any purpose restricted or prohibited by laws or regulations
- use of email to harass or intimidate others or to interfere with the ability of others to conduct district business.

Access to information, technology and facilities in general, and email in particular, is a privilege and must be treated as such by all users. Violations of the policy and this administrative rule can be a matter of legal action and/or disciplinary procedures, with sanctions ranging from reprimand, to loss of access, to referral to authorities and termination from employment. In any case where inappropriate use impacts performance of the network security or a user's job performance, an individual's privilege of access may be suspended without notice. Other violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination and/or legal action as warranted. Employees will report any misuse of district email or any violations of this administrative rule to the appropriate personnel.

Use Of Technology Resources In Instruction (Network) | IJNDB-R(3)

Network access

Because technology is a vital part of the educational process and the curriculum of the district, students and staff will be provided with access to the School District of Pickens County's network. By providing this access, the district

intends to promote educational excellence and allow access to resources unavailable through traditional means. Through the district's network, students and staff will have access to the following.

- networked software
- instructional hardware
- networked printers
- file storage space
- Internet and Internet resources

Student use of the network for accessing networked instructional software, hardware, printers, file storage space, Internet and Internet resources does not require written parent/legal guardian permission.

Terms and conditions of use

Acceptable use

The purpose of the district's decision to provide network access is to allow an expanded opportunity to educational resources. Use of the network must be in support of education and consistent with the educational objectives of the district.

Procedures for use

Administrators, teachers and other approved staff members may access the network for educational or work-related purposes at any time that is not disruptive and does not interfere with the performance of other responsibilities by the employee or other staff members.

Students will be allowed access to the district's network only through their teachers. Students should be supervised at all times by a staff member when using the network.

Rules governing use

The use of the network is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in disciplinary action. All staff and students must abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette, including the following.

- All users may use the network only for educational reasons. Non Academic uses are prohibited. Do not use the network for financial or commercial gain, for political purposes or for social/personal purposes (including media/music downloads).
- Users must adhere to state and federal copyright laws.
- Users must not engage in activities that are prohibited under local, state or federal law or by district policy.
- Users must protect student and staff confidentiality when using the network. This includes, but is not limited to, compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

- Users will not play non-instructional games or use the district's computer resources for other non-academic activities. In addition, users will not waste nor take supplies, such as paper, printer cartridges and CDs that are provided by the district.
- Users may not use or create threatening or obscene material or use offensive or harassing statements or language.
- Users may not use the network in such a way that would be disruptive to others.
- Users must follow the instructions of the supervising staff members.
- User names, account numbers and passwords issued to staff members and students must remain confidential.
- Attempts to tamper with programs, to access the system as another user or to share a password may result in cancellation of user privileges, as well as disciplinary action.
- Faculty and staff may not install any software on computers attached to the district's network without the prior approval of the district (AITS) department of technology. This includes, but is not limited to, file sharing programs, instant messaging programs and other Internet exchanges. Any request for installation should be made by submitting a description and use of the software to the district department of technology for review and approval.
- Faculty and staff should be aware that there is virus protection on all networked computers. The district is not responsible for any damage to machines or programs resulting from the exchange or importation of infected programs or files.
- Faculty and staff should be aware that when the district periodically updates the network and its computers, it is possible that their files may be removed from their local machines. It is recommended that employees maintain regularly updated backup copies of all files saved on the internal hard drive.
- The district is not responsible for loss or damage to any personal files obtained or stored on the network.
- Users must make every reasonable effort to secure instructional hardware, both inside and outside school property, at all times.

Penalties for improper use

Employees

An employee who violates the terms of this administrative rule or otherwise misuses the network will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.

Students

Students who violate the terms of this administrative rule, or who otherwise misuse their access to the network, will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the district's student behavior code, up to and including a recommendation for expulsion. The district will provide to parents/legal guardians, upon request, a student's log-in and password information for access to their child's files.

Employees and students

Violations of the laws of the United States or the state of South Carolina may subject the user to criminal prosecution. Vandalism of computer systems, including unauthorized access, is a criminal violation.

If a user incurs unauthorized costs, the user, as well as the user's parent/legal guardian (if the user is a student), will be responsible to reimburse the district for such costs.

The district reserves the right to review any material on user accounts without notice to or consent from the user.

Vandalism or harassment while using the network may result in cancellation of user privileges and disciplinary action. This includes, but is not limited to, uploading, creating or transmitting computer viruses.

Use of Technology Resources in Instruction (Electronic Communication with Students) | IJNDB-R(4)

Email, websites, blogs, text messaging and use of social media websites such as Twitter, Facebook and others are integral parts of the online lives of both students and educators. Both students and educators use these electronic forms of communication for their daily interactions with friends, family and their larger social networks. Although these forms of communications are dynamic, mobile and quick to reach their audience, they may, in many circumstances, not meet public and professional standards for communicating with students.

The expectations outlined in this administrative rule are designed for the following purposes.

- protecting the students, staff and district
- raising awareness of acceptable ways to use electronic communication tools when communicating with students
- raising awareness of the positive and negative outcomes that may result in using these tools with students

When communicating with students electronically, staff members are expected to adhere to these expectations.

TAP test

Electronic communication with students should always be transparent, accessible and professional as defined below.

- The communication is **transparent**. - All electronic communication between staff and students should be transparent. As a public school district, staff members are expected to maintain openness, visibility and accountability with regards to all communications.
- The communication is **accessible**. - All electronic communication between staff members and students should be considered a matter of record, part of the district archives and/or accessible by others.
- The communication is **professional**. - All electronic communication from district personnel to students should be written as a professional representing the district. This includes word choices, tone, grammar and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a professional staff member. Always choose words that are courteous, conscientious and generally businesslike in manner.

If communication meets all three of the criteria above, then it is very likely that the choice of communication methods with students is appropriate; moreover, such communication is encouraged.

Acceptable communication methods

SDPC email

Use of district email is always an appropriate way to communicate directly with students and parents/legal guardians. District email provides the district employee with a record of the communication. For this reason, only the district-provided email system should be used; personal email accounts should never be used [see IJNDB-R(2) for guidelines].

School websites and district provided web tools

The use of these district-provided tools is required. They are easily accessible and their content is highly transparent. With district websites and web tools (such as Schoology or PowerSchool), district employees can utilize similar types of communication that commercial social media websites deliver while also providing access to the curriculum beyond classroom walls. District provided websites and web tools allow for effective online learning by supporting online discussions, secure chat rooms, online delivery of assessments and the sharing of documents, images and other media, all in a secure, password-protected environment. All of the content is backed up and directly accessible. District provided websites and web tools meet all three of the TAP criteria detailed above.

Generally Unacceptable communication methods

Text messaging

Text messaging is a common form of communication. Since texting is such a quick and convenient way of communication, a simple message may lead to an extended texting conversation that can get “off topic.” Also, text messaging between a staff member and an individual student can easily be misinterpreted by a parent/legal guardian. If a teacher/coach/sponsor plans to use texting for immediate and urgent contact

with students/team members, he/she must be transparent about such use. He/she must make parents/legal guardians aware at the beginning of the school year or season that he/she may use texting. Remind 101 or a similar group-texting tool may be used, but parents must be allowed access to the group.

Non-district email accounts

District employees should never use personal email accounts to communicate with students about school matters. Adjunct coaches must also follow this expectation.

Online games and related activities

While many people enjoy gaming systems and recreational websites that allow them to compete with others through the Internet, such activity is not acceptable for staff members to knowingly engage in with students.

Personal social media accounts

Any employee-student interaction on social media must meet the TAP criteria. Private communication with students via social media is strongly discouraged. While schools use social media accounts for communication with the community, including students, these accounts are subject to safeguards established by the district administration to ensure transparency and accountability.

Personal use of social media

When staff members publish content, post pictures or maintain dialogue, regardless of the medium, professionalism, integrity and ethics in their role as an educator should never be compromised. A good question that staff members should ask themselves before posting or emailing a message is, "Would I mind if that information appeared on the front page of the local newspaper?" If the answer is "yes," then do not post it. Email and social networking sites are very public places. Statements posted on social media always have potential to impact the culture of a school. The wall between the role of a public educator and personal friendships with students should always be visible and strongly communicated.

School Use of Social Media

Schools are encouraged to use social media to communicate with the community and with students. However, school-run social media accounts must be subject to safeguards that ensure transparency, accessibility, and professionalism. The district administration will create and maintain guidelines for school social media use. These guidelines will be published in the School Communications Team Handbook and updated periodically to reflect changes in social media platforms. Guidelines for the use of any social media platform will ensure that a minimum of two employees have access to any school or district-run social media account at all times for accountability. No social media account may be created for a school or school program without approval from the principal/building administrator and notification of district administration.

School-run social media accounts should be used primarily as mass communication platforms. Communication with individual classes or limited student groups should be done using district-provided communication platforms such as Schoology.

Social Media | GBEEA)

The board acknowledges the role that communication through social media plays in 21st century learning.

Employees should take advantage of this technology in a manner that encourages professionalism, responsibility, safety, and awareness. However, social media use has the potential to result in disruption of the school environment and/or the workplace and can be in violation of board policy and/or local, state, or federal law. As such, the board recommends that district employees ensure all content associated with their social media accounts are consistent with their role as public school/state employees. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their use of social media as they are for any other public conduct.

Because of the rapid evolution of technology, every possible use of social media cannot be addressed in board policy. If an employee has a question regarding the appropriateness of a given use of social media, he/she should consult his/her direct supervisor or building principal for guidance.

This policy is designed to serve as a general code of conduct for appropriate use of social media, and every provision does not constitute a basis for potential employee discipline. However, all district policies and all local, state, and federal laws and regulations that cover employee conduct may be applicable in the social media environment, and violations thereof could result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Mandated Reporting

Employees are encouraged to report to the appropriate individuals or service providers any concerning behaviors they encounter in their use of personal or district-approved social media. Employees who are mandated reporters are required to abide by the same reporting responsibilities in the context of social media and must report abuse or neglect when, in their professional capacity, they receive information giving them reason to believe that a child's physical or mental health has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect.

Educational Social Media

At the beginning of each school year, employees should provide parents with information on any social media sites where information relevant to his/her child's education or extracurricular activities may be posted. However, no student or parent should be required to access information through a social media platform. Any essential information therein should be readily accessible in an alternate format.

Employees should ensure all social media platforms that students are asked to access for purposes of education or extracurricular activities are closely monitored. All content on these sites and/or pages must relate to education, curriculum, instruction, school-authorized activities and athletics, school or district news, or general information relating to work, activities, and accomplishments of the district, its staff, or students.

Employees should receive approval from their immediate supervisors before creating social media accounts separate from their personal accounts to house any content that students will be asked to utilize or view.

Only students, parents/legal guardians, and other individuals with a legitimate educational interest should have access to the information therein. Employees will provide user names, passwords, and other information necessary to access such social media sites to their building-level principal and/or direct supervisor. Any such site or page must be closely monitored for appropriateness of content. Posted content should be immediately removed if it is abusive, defamatory, or obscene; is fraudulent, deceptive, or misleading; targets, disparages, or discriminates; contains spam, advertising, solicitations, or includes links to other sites unrelated to an educational purpose; contains confidential information; is in violation of any intellectual property right of another; is in violation of any law or regulation; violates any board policy; or is otherwise offensive, graphic, or inappropriate in tone.

The board recognizes that maintenance of student and employee privacy is essential. Therefore, employees must not post confidential student information as protected by the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Schools may post “directory information” of students (as defined in policy JRA-R) unless the student’s record includes an Opt-out for Media & Directory Information form signed by the student’s parent or guardian.

No private messages should be sent directly from an employee to a student, except where the communication is clearly related to a district-approved school or extracurricular purpose. No ongoing communication with students in this format is appropriate. Whenever possible, a student’s parents/legal guardian should be included as a recipient of any such correspondence.

Public records

Electronic communications sent and received by district employees, including those transmitted via social media, may be considered public records subject to public disclosure or inspection under the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act. Employees should ensure that all electronic communications, including social media contributions, are professional in tone and content and are made for the express purpose of furthering the educational goals of the district.

Personal Social Media

The board recognizes the essential role of social media in the personal and professional relationships of many employees. Like all interactions in the community, employee interactions and posts on social media have the potential to impact the school environment. When staff members publish content, post pictures or maintain dialogue, regardless of the medium, the professionalism, integrity and ethics in their role as an educator should never be compromised. The wall between the role of a public educator and personal friendships with students should always be visible and strongly communicated.

In communication with students, employees should follow the “TAP” test; communication should always be transparent, accessible and professional as defined below.

The communication is transparent. - All electronic communication between staff and students should be transparent. As a public school district, staff members are expected to maintain openness, visibility and accountability with regards to all communications.

The communication is accessible. - All electronic communication between staff members and students should be considered a matter of record, part of the district archives and/or accessible by others.

The communication is professional. - All electronic communication from district personnel to students should be written as a professional representing the district. This includes word choices, tone, grammar and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a professional staff member. Always choose words that are courteous, conscientious and generally businesslike in manner.

No expectation of privacy

Employees are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the privacy settings for any social media platforms they utilize to ensure personal content is only viewable by their intended audience. However, employees are cautioned that there is no expectation of privacy in the information they share through social media, and there are numerous ways for “personal” content to be shared without their knowledge or permission (i.e., photo “tagging,” screen shots, etc.).

While the district will not monitor personal social media accounts, the superintendent or his/her designee has the right to act on information provided by students, parents/legal guardians, and community members that may indicate a violation of board policy or local, state, or federal law. Employees may not set up, update, or otherwise access personal social media sites and/or pages using the district’s computers, network, or equipment unless necessary for the administration of a school related social media account. District issued laptops for administrative and instructional use should not be used to access social media accounts during the instructional day unless it is for school or district business.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Technology

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U. S. Department of Education.

Students’ academic information is highly confidential. Any disclosure of information in software packages such as Enrich, MAP, PowerSchool, etc. may be in violation of FERPA and, therefore, subject to disciplinary action within the district and according to federal law.

Employees must keep logins and passwords to such data software packages secure and private. Passwords should never be saved to a cookie file.

Additionally, employees must keep such programs and data on their laptops secure, only entering or viewing data when in a secure and private environment.

Information about FERPA is available through the [on the district website in the student parent handbook](#).

PowerSchool, Schoology and Online Grades

PowerSchool is the state’s student information system. All teachers are required to use *PowerSchool*, *PowerTeacher Portal*, *PowerTeacher Grade Book*. All teachers are also required to use *Schoology*.

Web Page Requirements for Instructional Staff

Instructional staff members must adhere to the guidelines laid out by Instructional Services in the [Web Requirements for Instructional Staff](#) document, which is posted in the *Staff Portal*.

All personal information, links and photographs used by instructional staff must be of an appropriate educational or professional nature consistent with district policies, rules and guidelines.

Technology Proficiency

Technology Proviso 1.25

To provide effective and efficient use of the technology funding provided by the General Assembly, every certified employee – with the exception of those listed below – must demonstrate proficiency in technology standards as a part of his/her professional development plan.

Certified staff members who are **not required** to demonstrate technology proficiency are the following:

- Induction Teachers
- Second Year Teachers Under SAFE-T
- Third Year Teachers Who Have Not Met All Requirements for a Professional License
- School Psychologists

Renewal Cycle Clarification

Certified staff must renew technology proficiency every five years. Validation cycles for technology proficiency are the same as renewal cycles for licenses. Employees who renewed licenses on June 30, 2017 must meet technology proficiency requirements by June 30, 2022. The technology proficiency date entered cannot be over five years old and cannot be a future date.

Proficiency Requirements

Non-exempt staff members must meet **each** of the following requirements each license cycle period:

- **Renewal Credits (by end of cycle):**
 - You must have 30 total renewal credit hours for each five year cycle.
 - Renewal credits may be earned by taking graduate level technology coursework or recertification workshops.
- **AUP Online Internet Safety Course (once during cycle):** As required by *Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act*, school districts receiving e-rate monies must provide for educating minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, and cyberbullying awareness and response. The SDPC has purchased [AUP Online](#) software to facilitate this training. Teachers are required to complete the same courses the students they teach must complete. There is no proof of participation. Instead, we use the honor system. Please watch the videos your students need to watch once during the five year cycle and mark that you have done so on the [Technology Credit Verification](#) form.

Due Dates for 2019-2020

All 2019-2020 tech-related professional development and documentation is due by **March 2, 2019**.

Important: Log in to the *Staff Portal* for Technology Proficiency information. Full information is included in the resource.

LICENSURE

Each individual employed in an instructional, classroom teaching position or who serves in a position designed for the support of the instructional program in a public school of this state must hold an appropriate South Carolina teaching license.

Requirements for Licensure

The applicant must meet all requirements for licensure that are in effect on the date of receipt by the Office of Educator Services. The responsibility for providing accurate and complete documentation of eligibility is that of the applicant.

A person must be a citizen of the United States and must be at least 18 years of age before making an application for a teaching license.

South Carolina Teacher Examination Programs

To be eligible for a South Carolina teaching license, the applicant must:

1. Complete a teacher education program approved for licensure by the South Carolina Department of Education.
2. Score at least the minimum qualifying score on the required examinations. Information on dates and examination centers is available online at <http://www.ets.org>.

Acceptable Credit

All undergraduate and graduate credit and degrees must be earned through institutions accredited for general collegiate purposes by a regional or national accrediting association or through a South Carolina institution which has programs approved for teacher education by the South Carolina State Board of Education. Professional educational credit must be earned through an institution which has a teacher education program approved for initial licensure.

Graduate degrees acceptable for licensure purposes include academic or professional degrees in the field of education or in an academic area for which a corresponding or relevant teaching credential is authorized by the State Board of Education. All credit at the graduate level must be earned through the graduate school of an institution accredited for general collegiate purposes by a regional accrediting association and having a regular graduate division meeting regional or national association requirements, or through a South Carolina institution which has graduate programs approved for teacher education by the South Carolina State Board of Education.

All credits are computed by semester hours (three quarter hours are equivalent to two semester hours).

Duplicate credit shall not be allowed for courses with the same title unless approved by the Director of the Office of Educator Services of the South Carolina Department of Education.

Restricted Alternative Certification Requests/Out-of-Field Permits

Any person holding a valid South Carolina teaching license and who is assigned duties in an area for which that person is not properly certified may be eligible for a permit to teach out-of-field if the subject area is exempt from NCLB requirements. Out-of-field permits are to be issued only at the request of the employing school district. The employing district shall apply for a permit no later than 30 days after the date of assignment. Out-of-field permits are issued only for the academic year in which they are requested and expire on June 30.

Regulations governing effective dates of out-of-field permits shall coincide with those for initial, revised, and renewed licenses. To qualify for a permit, a person shall have a valid South Carolina teaching license and twelve semester hours of credit toward full licensure in the area of special preparation for which the permit is requested. Permits shall not be issued in the areas of school psychologist, speech and language pathologist, audiologists, social work and nurses.

A permit may be renewed upon presentation of six semester hours of credit in the area of which the permit is issued prior to issuance of another permit in the same area. Out-of-field permits may not be renewed more than two times (three-year limitation). If an individual holds a valid Career & Technology Certificate and has taught on that license for at least three years, the individual may qualify for an academic credential without having to satisfy the student teaching requirement for that credential; however, all other licensure requirements for the academic credential must be satisfied, including the Education Entrance Examination (EEE) or PRAXIS I.

Due to changes in federal legislation, licensure areas must meet NCLB requirements. Restricted Alternative Certification can be requested as long as the person is highly qualified and meets the requirements for out-of-field permits.

Recording of License

Each teacher is required to have his or her most recent license or permit recorded with the Human Resource Services office **prior to** the first payroll.

Change of License

If a change in license by the State Department of Education during the current fiscal year necessitates a salary adjustment, the adjustment will be effective on the date indicated on the license, adjustment retroactive to a preceding fiscal year. The teacher must submit the new license to Wanda Wells in the Office of Human Resources. Otherwise, the adjustment must be made the following month.

Experience Credit

Experience credit may be earned by serving as a teacher's aide provided the applicant held a valid state teaching license during the period of employment. The South Carolina Department of Education determines experience credit.

Change of Name

If a teacher changes her name, she must send a *Request for Change Action* form to the Wanda Wells at Central Services to have the teaching license changed. See additional information in earlier sections *Name Changes in Personnel Records* and *Contact Information Changes in Personnel Records*.

Renewal of Credentials

The Professional teaching credential is valid for five (5) years and expires on June 30 of the expiration period.

1. The total number of years an individual holds any type of temporary credential will be deducted from the normal five-year life of the Professional License at the time of issue.
2. To renew a Professional teaching credential, an applicant shall follow the procedures as specified in the District License Renewal Guidelines. Three forms should be completed and returned: request for change action, renewal credit verification, and the GBE/Professional development plan. Generally speaking, an applicant shall:
 - a. Submit a written request to have the credential renewed and the required fee, if any, for credential renewal to Wanda Wells at Central Services.
 - b. Submit documentation of having met South Carolina State Board of Education requirements for license renewal for six (6) semester hours or the equivalent in a licensure area during the licensure validity period. The semester hours or equivalent may be one of the following (if it applies to the applicant's specific situation as defined in the District License Renewal Guidelines):
 1. Six semester hours of appropriate college/university transcript credit;
 2. 120 in-service points earned through an approved district license renewal plan;
 3. Six semester hours of State Department of Education approved in-service credit; or
 4. Any combination of college transcript credit, in-service points, or State Department of Education approved in-service credit.
3. Credit earned through college courses, South Carolina State Department of Education in-service credits, or district renewal points in fields of critical need may be applied toward license renewal as long as they meet District License Renewal Guidelines and directly relate to the educator's professional growth and development plan, support the goals of the employing school district, and promote student achievement.
4. College/university renewal credit earned for licensure renewal purposes shall:
 - a. Be earned through a regionally accredited college or university.
 - b. Be submitted on official transcript to the Wanda Wells at the Central Services.
 - c. Be computed by semester hours.
5. District license renewal point system credit shall:
 - a. Be earned within a district license renewal point plan which is approved under State Board of Education criteria;

- b. Be awarded at the maximum rate of one (1) point for one hour of direct individual participation and twenty (20) points shall be considered the equivalent of one (1) semester hour of transcript credit for the purposes of computing licensure renewal; and
 - c. Be reciprocal from one South Carolina State Board of Education approved district renewal plan to another.
6. State Department of Education approved license renewal course credit shall:
 - a. Be earned within a planned course of instruction approved for renewal under State Board of Education requirements, and
 - b. Be awarded on the basis of one license renewal hour of credit for each fifteen (15) hours of direct individual participation.
7. Credit will not be allowed for a renewal activity that is repeated unless the activity has received prior approval in writing from the Director of Educator Services.
8. Credit earned through college courses and/or State Department of Education approved in-service courses and/or district license renewal points shall be relevant to one of the primary content area(s) of licensure. Teachers can designate up to five (5) areas as their primary licensure areas. All areas for which the applicant retains beyond the five (5) primary areas of the licensure will continue to be listed in the licensure.
9. Regulations governing effective dates of license renewal shall be the same as those for initial and revised licenses.
10. All certified employees need to study and follow the District License Renewal Plan that can be found on the district's Web page.

License Advancement

To advance a license from one classification to another, the applicant must provide to the Office of Educator Services the following:

1. Written request to have license advanced.
2. The required documentation of having met State Board of Education requirements for license advancement.
3. The required fees, if any, for advancement of the license.

AdvancED Standards for All Teachers

Teachers shall earn at least six semester hours of credit, or the equivalent as approved by the state committee, during each five-year period of employment. The six semester hours of credit or the equivalent shall be designed to increase the competency of the teacher in the subjects, which he/she teaches.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Each educator will have an Individualized Professional Development Plan. The plan will evolve after his/her school examines its data to determine the students' strengths and weaknesses. After determining how he/she can improve student achievement, each educator will set one professional development goal with activities, supportive evidence, and resources required to accomplish the goal.

The district will plan staff development and continuing education activities that meet state mandates, district initiatives, and the needs of the majority of individuals. Teachers and administrators may use these activities as a part of the Goal Based Evaluation /Professional Growth and Development Plan.

SDPC uses *PDEExpress*, a web-based professional development and staff information management system to manage our professional development. Employees will use PDEExpress to find out what courses and workshops are being offered, to register for courses and workshops, and to access their transcripts of professional development activities.

The [link to PDEExpress](#) is located in the ClassLink Launchpad.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT & INSTRUCTION

Lesson Planning

The School District of Pickens County requires all teachers to provide both long-range and short-range lesson plans. Long-range plans should be carefully developed to ensure that all students receive instruction based on the appropriate South Carolina College and Career-Ready Standards. These plans should further outline how the teacher will provide for diverse learners with diverse teaching practices. It is necessary that teachers outline their daily lesson plans. An average substitute can handle the class remarkably well with well-made lesson plans. A good substitute can do little with inadequate lesson plans. Plans should be designed to meet the needs of the particular class and individuals taught. The teacher should exercise care in planning for all classes regardless of ability level and continually evaluate his/her success with each individual.

Permanent Records

Good records are of inestimable value to the school. Accuracy and neatness are essential. The homeroom teacher each year will be responsible for each student's permanent record.

Use of Records

Records pertaining to individual students are to be used only for the promotion or welfare of the student.

Information from student records shall not be made available to any outside person or agency unless it is clear that such person or agency will use the records to the advantage of the student or his family. At no time shall information from a student's record be given to anyone outside the school staff unless the principal has given permission.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) shall be complied with in the handling of any information pertaining to students. Psychological reports should be filed in the office and should not be a part of the student's record folder.

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 was enacted by the United States Congress and became effective on November 19, 1974. The Act affords a parent or guardian of a student under 18 years of age or eligible student (student who has attained the age of 18 years or is attending an institution of post-secondary education), the right to

1. inspect and review the student's education records, other than those exempted by the Act, kept by a school or the School District of Pickens County;
2. challenge or request the removal or modification of material felt to be inaccurate, misleading, or inappropriate;
3. limit the number and type of individuals who will be able to see a student's records;
4. receive a list of those individuals who have been permitted by school officials to see a student's records;
5. be notified every time a student's records are turned over to a court by judicial order or subpoena; and
6. be informed by school officials of the provisions of the Act.

Education records are those records including, but not limited to, handwritten material, print, tapes, film, microfilm and/or microfiche, which are directly related to a student and are maintained by a school or the district.

The principal of each school and the superintendent are responsible for the education records located in the schools and the district's central administrative office, respectively.

SDPC schools may disclose copies of student records without the written consent of the parent of the student or the eligible student only if the disclosure is

1. to school officials (principals, teachers, school counselors, and district administrative professional employees) of the district who have been determined to have legitimate educational interest ("legitimate educational interest" means an interest related to a school official's responsibility for scheduling, teaching, counseling, disciplining, health care, or other similar responsibilities to students);
2. to school officials or other school districts in which the student seeks or intends to enroll;
3. to federal, state, and local educational officials or authorities;

4. in connection with a student's application for, or receipt of, financial aid;
5. to organizations conducting research studies for or on behalf of educational agencies or institutions, if the studies are carried out in such a way that no personal identification of students and their parents can be made by persons other than the persons or organizations conducting the studies and if such information will be destroyed when no longer needed for the purpose for which it was collected;
6. to accrediting organizations in order to carry out their accrediting functions;
7. to parents of a dependent student, as defined in Section 52 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954;
8. to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena, but the school will make a reasonable effort to notify the parent or eligible student of the order of subpoena in advance of compliance;
9. to appropriate parties in the health and safety emergency, subject to certain conditions.

SDPC schools may disclose directory information from the education records of a student who is in attendance or a former student, provided the parent of the student or eligible student has not informed the school principal of his objection to the designation after the Annual Notification of Rights has been sent to the parents.

SDPC has designated the following information as being directory information related to a student: the student's name, address, telephone number, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, awards received, and the most recent school attended.

If a parent does not want SDPC to disclose directory information from his/her child's education records to any outside organization without prior written consent, he/she must complete the *SDPC Opt-Out for Media & Directory Information* form, available in the student handbook and [on the district website](#), and return that completed form to the student's principal no later than fifteen (15) days after receiving the handbook. An *Opt-Out for Media & Directory Information* form is required to be completed and returned each year.

A parent or eligible student may challenge the content of the school records and request corrections or deletion of any entries that he believes to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights; however, a properly recorded grade may not be challenged for the purpose of having it changed to a higher grade.

Any parent or eligible student who believes there has been a violation of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 has a right to file a complaint with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; provided the parent or eligible student has exhausted all administrative remedies specified in Board Policy JR, Student Records. Any parent or eligible student may obtain a copy of the board policy by making his request to the principal, the superintendent, or his/her designee.

Grading System

SDPC requires that all teachers use Schoology and PowerTeacher through PowerSchool. Grades 3K through 2 use Schoology for communicating with parents and use PowerTeacher for attendance. Grades 3-12 use Schoology for grades, assignments, announcements, and

communicating with parents; they also use PowerTeacher for attendance. Additionally, teachers in grades 3-12 use PowerTeacher Gradebook as noted below.

The primary purpose of grading is to inform students and parents of student achievement to standards. Teachers are expected to provide parents with a valid appraisal of their child's accomplishments that accurately reflect level of achievement. Regularly-issued report cards combined with scheduled parent-teacher conferences serve to promote a process of continuous evaluation of student performance. This process provides a basis for bringing about improvements in student performance. An observation assessment is used to define progress in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, first grade, and second grade. All other students will be graded on the numerical grading scale. Refer to SDPC Board Policy IKA for more details.

Teachers are expected to use the [School District of Pickens County Weightings Assessment Guidelines](#).

In grades 3-12, teachers enter assignments and grades in Schoology and sync these to the PowerTeacher Gradebook. Teachers enter final grading period adjustments in PowerTeacher Gradebook as needed before interim reports/report cards go home. Examples of needed adjustments are grades below 60 and above 100, WP, WF, conduct grades, transfer grades, and mandatory comments. Teachers enter attendance in PowerTeacher Gradebook through PowerSchool.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued in all schools at the end of the nine-week grading period. They will be distributed five (5) school days following the close of each grading period except when the fifth day is a Friday or the day before a holiday. In that instance, cards are distributed on the sixth school day following the close of the grading period. Students are expected to return report cards the following morning after they are taken home.

Interim progress reports will be distributed at four and one-half week intervals between grading periods to all students so that parents and students will be aware of the student's progress.

Parent/teacher conferences are encouraged. A parent/teacher conference may be productive when report cards and letters have failed to establish rapport. Face-to-face contact is the best means of communication. See Policy IKACA.

Reporting to Parents

Communication between schools and parents is vital in helping each child reach her or his potential. Today, when the lives of children have become so complex, it is essential that home and school find ways to keep in close touch concerning the education of children. The purpose of conferences with parents or sending home report cards should be to help teachers and parents to become acquainted and to understand children better.

The teacher is expected to maintain Schoology and PowerTeacher as noted above so that parents are able to access information through Schoology.

Homework

When making homework assignments, the teacher should consider the individual needs of the student. It is not necessary to make the same assignment to all students in the class. Homework should be designed so that it becomes a vital part of the learning process.

In assigning homework teachers will do the following:

- Ensure that homework reinforces skills and material already learned in class.
- Ensure that homework prepares students for upcoming class topics.
- Ensure that homework teaches students to work independently.
- Ensure that homework will aid in evaluating student progress.
- Ensure that homework and projects are posted to your web page.
- Assign appropriate lengths of homework. Ten minutes to 45 minutes is recommended daily for first through third graders. Forty-five minutes to 90 minutes of homework time is recommended for fourth through sixth graders. Secondary students may manage two to three hours of homework daily.
- Help students develop wise study habits.
- Encourage parents to make homework a top priority.
- Ensure that homework is not used for disciplinary purposes.

Field Trips & Excursions | Policy IJOA

A field trip is defined as any learning activity which is sponsored, approved and supervised by the school and which requires the student(s) to leave the school grounds. Regularly scheduled athletic and band events are not required to follow the procedures outlined in this policy. The principal will approve schedules for all athletic and band events which are part of the regularly scheduled school program.

Introduction

Field trips that directly relate to concepts and objectives of the approved curriculum for the particular subject area and grade level may be scheduled as part of the instructional day. Field trips, like any other instructional activity, must be wisely chosen, thoroughly planned and carefully conducted. Special attention must be given to clarifying the purposes/objectives of a field trip and to providing meaningful follow-up discussion and activities after the trip has been completed. Trips to amusement parks strictly for the purpose of entertainment or a reward will not be approved.

Regulations

- All field trips will be approved by the school principal. After securing principal approval, field trip requests must be approved by the superintendent's designee.
- A request for an overnight trip must be submitted two months in advance to permit sufficient time for study. No overnight group trips, in-state or out-of-state, will be permitted for more than three consecutive school days.
- Each student who goes on a field trip must have written parental permission on the district approved form.

- Students may be asked to pay all or part of the expense of field trips, provided arrangements can be made for the payment of expenses for those unable to do so. No student should be denied field trip opportunities based on his/her ability to pay.
- The board encourages groups to use district activity buses, state-owned buses or other forms of commercial transportation with sufficient liability insurance coverage for field trips. Groups must not use private vehicles without special permission. Students will not drive private vehicles except in special circumstances with approval of principal and appropriate waiver signed.
- When school buses or commercial buses are used for field trips, the following procedures must be followed for the safety and welfare of the students.
- Routes should be planned to avoid dangerous road hazards and heavy traffic routes.
- Each bus must be numbered.
- A roster should be made of all occupants of each bus. The roster should also include the name and phone number of parents/legal guardians. (Copies of the roster should be maintained at the school and on the bus.) A copy of the approved field trip form with signatures and including the name and phone number of the school contact person(s) will be transmitted to the district office prior to the trip. These copies will remain at the school for the remainder of that school year.
- Each child should wear a nametag on inside clothing.
- Teachers should be briefed on what to do and who to contact in emergency situations.
- No advertisement, announcement and/or discussion of the proposed field trip with students or parents/legal guardians will take place until the principal has received approval from the superintendent's designee.

A school may set specific standards for students in the areas of behavior, attendance and grades in order for a student to have standing to participate in a field trip. These standards must be approved by the superintendent or his/her designee prior to going into effect. After being approved at the district level, these standards must then be communicated to parents/legal guardians in writing in advance of the field trip.

In order for a school's standards to be approved at the district level, the following conditions must be present.

- To disqualify a student for misbehavior, the student must have a discipline record that contains an out-of-school suspension. The principal must then verify that this out-of-school suspension was earned for bona fide inappropriate behavior.
- To disqualify a secondary student due to attendance, the student must have already exceeded the maximum number of unlawful absences allowed in a specific course.
- To disqualify a secondary student for grades, the student must be failing a course that is required for promotion to the next grade or for graduation that would be missed due to the field trip.

If a student is disqualified from participating in a field trip for behavior, attendance or grades, the school must offer the student an alternative curriculum at school for the time of the field trip.

Planning Field Trips

- All required forms are online under [Employee Forms & Publications/Field Trips](#).
- Every chaperone must receive volunteer training and have an approved background check. Contact the school's volunteer liaison to ensure chaperones have been approved.
- **Background checks must be requested at least two weeks before the date of the field trip.** Background checks will not be conducted on the day of the field trip.

- **At least four to six weeks** before the date of the field trip, submit a completed *Field Trip and Bus Request* form to your principal for approval and signature. Transportation costs are subject to change, so check the latest information online under [Student Transportation/Teachers and Administrators](#). Submit the signed form to Central Services for approval.
- **After obtaining district approval**, send *Permission to Participate* forms home. A *Permission to Participate* form must be completed for each student. The form is also available in Spanish.
- **At least two weeks** before the date of the field trip,
 - 1) Submit a *Field Trip and Bus Request* form to Transportation Services;
 - 2) Submit a *Field Trip Requisition* to Financial Services – “emergency” or last-minute checks will not be issued;
 - 3) Verify that all chaperones have been volunteer trained and have an approved background check.
- **At least one week** before the date of the field trip, submit a *Field Trip Meal Request* form to the school’s cafeteria manager.

Video Guidelines

The use of a full-length video/DVD in schools is acceptable provided the following compliance criteria are met:

- The video/DVD must support specific documented goals, objectives, and academic standards of the instructional lesson. The video/DVD must be part of face-to-face instruction and may not be used for reward, entertainment, or time-filler;
- The school administration must approve the video for instructional appropriateness before it is shown;
- The media specialist must approve the video/DVD for copyright compliance before it is shown;
- No movie/video/DVD rated R or above may be shown;
- In elementary and middle schools, only “G” rated (General Audience) movies/videos/DVD’s may be shown;
- In high schools, any movies/videos/DVD’s rated PG (Parental Guidance) or PG-13 require parental permission from each student; and
- In high schools, for PG or PG-13 movies/videos/DVD’s, provisions for a meaningful alternate activity must be provided for students whose parents do not wish their child to view this material.

Further requirements:

- A video/DVD worksheet must be completed (with principal’s signature). [The worksheet may be found in the Staff Portal](#).
- For high school students, a sample parent permission form is also provided and may be found with the video/DVD resources.

Discipline

It is essential that each teacher realize the responsibility for directing student behavior at all times and understand that his or her responsibility does not cease when the student or teacher leaves the classroom.

Sending minor disciplinary cases to the office to be handled by the principal will hinder the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. However, the school administration is available where there are discipline problems which cannot be handled satisfactorily by the classroom teacher.

Corporal Punishment | JKA

The use of corporal punishment, defined as any act of physical force upon a student for the purpose of punishing that student, is not acceptable in this district and will not be tolerated as a disciplinary measure.

The board will permit the use of reasonable and necessary physical force under the following circumstances:

- to quell a disturbance which threatens physical injury to persons, including those students involved, or which threatens serious damage to property
- to obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects upon the person or within the control of a student
- to defend one's self
- to remove a student from a classroom or other school property when the student's continued presence poses a threat of danger to other persons or property.

Student Welfare | JLF

Reporting Cases of Child Abuse/Neglect

Any principal, assistant principal, school teacher, nurse or counselor who has received information in his/her professional capacity which gives him/her reason to believe that a child under the age of 18 has been or may be abused or neglected as defined by law (S.C. Code 20-7-490) must report such action. The report is to be either to the county department of social services or the county law enforcement agency.

Other school employees who have reason to believe that a child under age 18 has been subjected to, or who may be subjected to, physical abuse or neglect may also report or cause a report to be made as stated above.

The state of South Carolina provides both civil and criminal immunity to those reporting suspected child abuse or neglect. Anyone required to report who knowingly fails to do so may be guilty of a misdemeanor.

Legal Definition of Physical Abuse: Serious physical injury inflicted by non-accidental means.

Legal Definition of Neglect

A neglected child is one who is not receiving proper or necessary support or education as required by law, or medical, psychiatric, psychological, or other care necessary to his/her wellbeing, or one who is abandoned by his/her parent or guardian.

The board shall cooperate with the local County Board of Social Services by authorizing the Superintendent to appoint, when requested by the Board of Social Services, a member of the professional staff to serve on an advisory council. The staff member chosen to serve on the advisory council should be one whose training and licensure will best meet the needs of the council's purpose.

Maintenance

Teachers should contact the principal when repairs are needed in the classroom. Do not make requests directly to the custodial staff unless emergency repairs are needed. The software system SchoolDude is the appropriate manner to make a request.

Excusing Students

Students should be excused from school only for approved reasons and then only by the principal, with knowledge and consent of parent or guardian. Students should NOT be sent away from school on errands.