



# **PICKENS COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL FACULTY HANDBOOK 2015-2016**

**Pennie Fowler, Principal**

**Brian Barnhill, Assistant Principal**

**1802 Refuge Road**

**Jasper, Ga. 30143**

**Phone: (706) 253-1830**

**Fax: (706) 253-1835**

<http://pickensmid.pickens.k12.ga.us/>

**A proud Georgia Lighthouse School to Watch!**



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## **Pickens County Schools' Mission**

We will educate our students in a safe, nurturing, and fiscally responsible environment that holds the highest expectations.

## **Pickens County Schools' Vision**

Graduation and Life Preparation for All

## **Pickens County Schools Goals and Objectives**

- We will educate our students and hold high expectations for their performance.
- We will educate our students in a safe, nurturing and orderly environment.
- All shareholders in our school system will demonstrate a sense of ownership and responsibility.
- Our school system will be fiscally responsible.
- We will continuously improve our school system by communicating clearly and regularly with all stakeholders in our community.

## **Pickens County Middle School's Mission**

The mission of the Pickens County Middle School Community is to prepare our students for high school graduation and future success by inspiring them to become responsible learners and productive members of society.

## **Pickens County Middle School's Vision**

Graduation and Life Preparation for All

## **Pickens County Middle School's Beliefs**

Excellence in student learning is the chief priority for the school.

Teachers, administrators, parents, and the community share the responsibility for advancing the school's mission.

The commitment to continuous improvement is imperative if our school is going to enable students to become confident, self-directed, lifelong learners.

Students learn in different ways and should be provided with a variety of instructional approaches to support their learning.

## **Assembly Procedures**

It is expected that students will enter and leave the assembly in a quiet and orderly manner. Teachers are to inform students as to appropriate behavior before going to the assembly and monitor the students during the assembly program.

## **Athletics**

At the present time, Pickens County Middle School offers athletic competition in nine sports - basketball, cheerleading, football, golf, softball, wrestling, tennis, track/cross country, and soccer. Each middle school sport is conducted only if the school administration is able to appoint a head coach with the appropriate credentials.

All students who participate in athletics in grades 6-12 must have an annual physical examination and be covered by the school athletic insurance policy or by their parents' insurance.

Teachers, along with an athletic booster club, will be asked to help support the athletic program by working in the ticket booth and/or the concession stands during athletic events.

Emphasis of the middle school athletic program is not on winning, but to develop skill and knowledge of the sport as well as good sportsmanship and a sense of fair play. Students involved in athletics activities in grades 6-12 must comply with the Georgia "No Pass No Play!" regulations. Students not meeting this requirement will not be eligible for one grading period and until they pass 4 out of 5 academic subjects the grading period prior to participation. Practices and games occurring on a school night cannot begin until the end of the regular school day and must end at 7:30 p.m.

## **Attendance and Leave**

All staff members are expected to be present at work. We each play a very important role in providing for a quality instructional program. When any of us are absent, our children do not receive our highest quality of service.

All teachers are expected to be at school no later than 7:45 a.m. and remain at school until at least 3:45 p.m. Teachers should supervise their respective hall areas until students have departed. Any exceptions to this procedure will need to be cleared by the principal in advance. Please remember to fob in each day when arriving and fob out when leaving.

## Leave Requests

**Jury Duty:** Should a teacher be requested to serve on jury duty, he/she will notify the principal as soon as possible. Teachers excused for jury duty should be sure to have all lesson plans available for at least one week.

Faculty and staff will be allowed to keep their jury duty pay as well as their regular pay.

**Personal Leave:** Each teacher has 3 days of personal leave each school year. Personal leave is granted upon prior approval of the principal. Pre-planning, post-planning, and regularly scheduled in-service days shall not be used for personal leave (Board Policy). Personal leave in excess of 3 days shall be deducted as in #3-F of the sick leave section of this handbook.

**Professional Leave:** Professional leave needs prior approval by the principal and/or the superintendent. Professional leave should be connected to the school improvement plan or an approved personal development plan.

### **Sick Leave:**

- 1) A maximum of 12 1/2 sick leave days are allotted per school year.
- 2) All sick leave days not used may be carried over to the next school year.
- 3) Sick leave may be utilized for the following:
  - A) Personal illness or injury.
  - B) Absence necessitated by exposure to contagious disease.
  - C) Absence due to illness or death in the employee's immediate family. (The term "immediate family" shall be interpreted to mean father, mother, brother, sister, child, husband, or wife of the employee, or a relative living in the residence of the employee.)
  - D) Family leave as determined by the employee, employee's physician, and the superintendent.
  - E) Three consecutive absences due to an illness will require a doctor's statement. A doctor's written statement must accompany three of the allotted nine sick leave days.
  - F) Any sick leave above the allotted number of days which is allowed shall result in a deduction equal to one day's salary for each day absent (190 days divided into the annual salary will equal one

day's salary). Employees on an 11 or 12-month contract will have their yearly salary divided by the appropriate number of days.

- G) Sick and personal leave is broken down into two hour (1/4 day) time segments. Any 2 hours or less shall be charged as 1/4 day.

**Securing Substitute Teachers During Leave:** Substitutes should be arranged in advance whenever possible. All teachers and paraprofessionals will be provided with a current list of approved substitutes and are responsible for getting their own substitutes. Please notify the receptionist of the date you will be absent and who your substitute will be. If your absence is due to professional leave, you may secure your own substitute or ask the receptionist to secure a sub for you. The receptionist will secure a sub for you in emergency situations (i.e., car accident, emergency room, death in family, etc.).

Appropriate lesson plans should be left on the teacher's desk in a folder labeled "Substitute Teacher." The folder should also include fire drill and evacuation procedures, class rosters for taking attendance, and the name of a teacher in your grade level/team that the substitute should contact if questions arise.

### **Certification of Teachers**

It is the responsibility of each certified staff member to keep his/her teaching certificate up-to-date. Dr. Lisa Galloway, Human Resources Director for Pickens County Schools, is available to assist with questions, forms, etc.

**College Transcripts:** Colleges do not automatically send transcripts. The individual employee must request the transcript. Request an official college transcript immediately after completing course work. Request that the transcript go to: Pickens County Schools, Attention: Lisa Galloway, 100 D. B. Carroll Street, Jasper, GA 30143.

### **Communication with Parents**

Communication with parents is essential and should occur on a regular basis. Parents need to hear positive things about their child, not just the negative. Keep parents informed about their child's academic progress and any behavior concerns you may have, as well as special projects, activities or field trips that may be planned for your class or grade level. Good communication between the parent and teacher is a key factor for student success.

## Computer Usage

**Teacher computers:** Each teacher is assigned a laptop for their use. Please do not allow students to have access to your laptop unless directed by administration. Please adhere to the Pickens County School District Portable Technology Use Guidelines for appropriate care and use of equipment such as laptops and iPads.

The school district provides students, staff and any other users access to the district's technologies. However, this use is a privilege and is not intended to be a public forum.

Users should not think that their files on the school district's system are private. If routine maintenance and monitoring of the district's system show that a user has violated this policy, another school district policy, or the law, school district officials will conduct an individual investigation or search if they have reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover a violation of law or district policy.

The district cooperates fully with local, state and federal authorities in any investigation concerning or related to any illegal activities or activities not in compliance with district policy.

**Student computers (classroom and lab):** Computers should be used for educational purposes — not as a “reward” or “fun time.” Please carefully monitor websites students are on when using the lab or computers in your classroom; the safety filters do not always prevent students from viewing inappropriate websites.

**Computer shutdown:** Make sure the student computers in your classroom are shutdown at the end of the day. Also, if your class is the last class using the lab for the day, please ensure that all computers in the lab are shutdown before you leave.

**School Board policy IFBGC “Employee Computer and Internet Use” states that:**

Employees are responsible for good behavior on school computer networks and the Internet just as they are in a classroom, a school hallway, or other school property. Communications on the network and Internet are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply. The network and Internet are provided for employees to conduct research and communicate with others. Access to network services and the Internet will be provided to employees who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Access is a privilege, not a right. Access entails responsibility.

Technology has become an important teaching tool and is available throughout the school environment. Restriction of technology access limits an employee's ability to access valuable and important information. Pickens County Schools provides technology/internet access to all employees.

To ensure proper use of technology resources, staff will provide developmentally appropriate guidance to employees as they make use of telecommunications and electronic information resources to conduct research and other studies related to the school curriculum. All employees will be informed by staff of their rights and responsibilities as users of any district network and the Internet prior to gaining access to that network, either as an individual user or as a member of a group. Technology should be used to achieve educational goals and implement school curriculum. School technology resources should not be used for non-educational activities.

### **TECHNOLOGY USE RULES**

Individual users of the district computer networks and the Internet are responsible for their behavior and communications over those networks. It is presumed that users will comply with district standards.

Network storage areas may be treated as other school property. Network administrators may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and insure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on district servers will be always be private.

Pickens County Schools employs an internet filtering program that will screen and filter the majority of obscene material.

Employees may publish school-related work on the Pickens County Schools web site.

Employees using school technology resources (networks and the Internet) shall not:

- Send, download, display or distribute offensive messages or pictures, including but not limited to, pornography, racist materials, vulgar jokes/ cartoons, anti-religious propaganda, and ethnic insults.
- Send, download, display or distribute information that advocates violence and/or destruction of property or other violations of legal statutes
- Use obscene language
- Harass, insult or attack others



- Use technology resources for non-educational purposes
- Damage computers, computer systems or computer networks
- Engage in practices that threaten the network (e.g. loading files that may introduce a virus, destroying data, etc.)
- Violate copyright laws
- Use others' passwords
- Trespass in others' folders, work or files
- Intentionally waste limited resources (e.g. paper, disk space, etc.)
- Employ the network for commercial purposes
- Promote any religion or religious institution
- Assist a public campaign for election of any person to any office (excluding school elections)
- Engage in any other such behaviors as may violate existing school and Board policies

### **Consequences**

- Employee violations are subject to sanctions, such as loss of access, reprimand, suspension, and loss of employment.

## **Energy Conservation**

Every faculty and staff member has a responsibility to conserve energy at the school. The school staff can conserve great amounts of energy, thereby reducing our energy costs, by following the same habits we use in our own homes. Please turn off lights, computers, copy machines, and other items that can be shut down when not in use. Energy conservation at each school will be monitored by the central office on a regular basis. The school administration must approve teacher appliances in the classroom.

## **Faculty Meetings, Grade Level Meetings and Committee Meetings**

Faculty meetings will be held on a scheduled Tuesday each month (see PCMS Meeting Schedule). The PCMS Meeting Schedule will be closely adhered to; however, please be aware that certain situations (i.e., school cancellation due to weather) may necessitate that a meeting be rescheduled. All certified staff members are expected to attend all faculty meetings. Please do not schedule conferences, personal appointments, etc. on faculty meeting days. Please do not bring your personal children to faculty meetings. Classified staff members are invited to attend faculty meetings but are not required to attend.

Refer to the PCMS Meeting Schedule for Grade Level meetings, RTI meetings, content area meetings, and committee meetings.

### **Fee Collections**

- 1) All persons collecting monies are responsible for those monies until the secretary has received them.
- 2) Teachers are never to leave money in the building or to hold large amounts of money at any time.
- 3) All collected monies must be turned in to the school bookkeeper or administration by the end of the school day.
- 4) Any loss of monies shall be the responsibility of the teacher.
- 5) Receipt books should be kept on all fees collected by the teacher.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips, which are related to classroom studies, are encouraged. All field trips must have prior approval of the principal at least 25 school days before the date of the trip and must be submitted on the field trip request form. Field trips should be educational in nature. The teacher has the following responsibilities when field trips are taken:

- 1) Plan the field trip as an extension of a specific classroom study.
- 2) Complete the official field trip request form provided by the school office and get approved 25 school days prior to the date of the trip.
- 3) Determine the total cost of the field trip and prorate the share for each student.

- 4) Collect money for the field trip and process it properly with the school secretary. No money is to be collected until the field trip has been approved.
- 5) Provide appropriate supervision for the students while on the field trip including the provision of additional chaperones as the number of students on the trip dictates (10 to 1 ratio is recommended). A chaperone must be an employee of Pickens County School System or a parent with current and approved criminal background check.
- 6) Account for all students on the field trip at all times and be sure no student is left behind at any stop.
- 7) Secure from each student involved in the field trip written parental permission for his/her involvement. Copies of parental permission with medical information need to be submitted to the principal before departure from school. Additional copies of student medical information need to be taken along with the sponsoring teachers on the field trip.
- 8) Proper evaluation and follow-up for the field trip in the classroom to insure that the instructional purpose of the field trip is fulfilled. Example, students could be asked to write a brief summary of their experiences on the field trip.
- 9) Notification to the cafeteria manager at least 2 weeks prior to the field trip of any field trip date. This should be done whether or not a lunch is being requested so as to properly plan for the day. Preferably, students on a field trip should bring their own lunches.
- 10) All field trips relying on PCPS System for transportation must not begin earlier than 8:30 a.m. and must end by 2:00 p.m. if on a school day. Sponsoring teachers must submit appropriate transportation paperwork 20 school days prior to the field trip. The bus driver also needs an accurate list of students riding on the bus. Copies of bus lists need to be submitted to the principal prior to departure.
- 11) There will be no academic field trips approved to Six Flags or other similar places during the school day.
- 12) The following places have been approved by the Pickens County Board of Education for field trips: Fernbank Science Center, Atlanta Zoo, Etowah Mounds, the State Capitol, Kennesaw Battlefield, Chickamauga Battlefield, Chief Vann House, Dahlonega Gold Museum, the High Museum of Art, Echota State Park, Historical Tour of Pickens County, the Sunset Planetarium, and Young Harris Planetarium.

- 13) Only PCMS school personnel should discipline students while on field trips. Tour guides, parent chaperones or site security should not be responsible for discipline. In certain school-wide or grade-level field trips, additional discipline criteria will be in effect. Students may not be ineligible to attend field trips if they have an OSS suspension during the school year or more than one ISS suspension.
- 14) All field trips must be self-supporting.
- 15) The cost should be determined in advance and pro-rated among all students participating in the trip.
- 16) Monies should be collected, recorded, and turned in to the bookkeeper or administration by the end of the school day.
- 17) The bookkeeper will establish individual accounts for all field trips or activities for which expenses shall be paid.
- 18) Students cannot be excluded from field trips due to financial reasons. Please speak to the principal regarding students who cannot pay before the trip occurs.

### **Fire Drills/Tornado Drills**

A fire drill will be held each month. The following rules will be in effect for fire drills:

- 1) Teachers are requested to explain the fire drill procedure on the first day of school. During the first week of school, teachers are asked to take a few minutes during homeroom period to remind students of the fire drill procedures and routes. This is important!
- 2) At the sound of the fire alarm bell, everyone should cease talking, leave his/her books and march single file from the room. Students should walk rapidly without running.
- 3) Each classroom will have a posted floor plan of the building with arrows in red indicating the fire evacuation route. Each teacher and student must know routes from each room in which he/she has a class.
- 4) Each teacher must take his/her class record/grade book so proper accounting of pupils can be made. Teachers are responsible for turning off the lights and closing the door after all students have left.

- 5) Teachers will guide students to designated safe areas away from the building and remain there until the “all clear” bell is sounded.

Tornado Drills - Tornado drills will be conducted periodically throughout the school year in accordance with civil defense procedures. Instructions for a tornado drill will be provided to students prior to the time of those drills. Generally students should move to the inner most portion or basement of the building in which they are located at the time of the drill. Students should move to the designated area, bring a book or notebook to place over their heads, sit down with their heads to the wall, put their heads between their knees, and place the book or notebook over their heads for protection. An “all clear” bell or announcement will be sounded to instruct students to the classroom.

A storm/tornado “safe area” plan will be posted in each classroom.

### **Fundraising**

Fundraising activities are governed by the Pickens County Board of Education. All fundraising activities must receive prior written approval from the principal. Fundraising activities sponsored by supportive groups (ex. PTSA, Boosters groups, etc.) may not involve any student during the regular school day. Monies from fundraising efforts must be turned into the front office for safe keeping. Teachers should not keep a large sum of money in their classrooms at any time and must turn in all monies by the end of the school day to the bookkeeper or school administrator.

The following is a list of approved fundraising projects on a continuing basis: school pictures; yearbooks; concessions from ball games. Each club/grade is allowed one fundraising project per year.

Fundraising activities that include food sales must have administrator approval and follow the Smart Snacks Rules. The Assistant Principal will monitor these fundraisers and keep the appropriate documentation.

### **Grading Policy**

In order to comply with the Pickens County Schools grading policy, PCMS uses number grades on report cards for all students. Number grades are on the following scale:

90-100	=	A
80-89	=	B
70-79	=	C
0-69	=	F

Truth in grading should be the general rule of thumb for reporting student grades. A student's grade should accurately reflect the level of mastery that the student has demonstrated in class with regard to the Georgia Standards of Excellence and Georgia Performance Standards.

Tests or any written assignment should be returned to the student within a reasonable length of time (i.e., less than 5 days). Recorded tests are not to be graded by other students. Quizzes may be graded in class.

Students should be reminded at the beginning of each marking period of all the requirements of the course including the basis in which grades will eventually be assigned, procedures for making up work when absent, expectations of behavior in the classroom, and the weight each activity will bring to the student's final grade.

Students should receive at least two feedback grades from the teacher each week to help students and parents measure student progress and identify any potential weaknesses.

A deficiency slip or progress report should be sent to a parent mid-term if a student falls below the teacher's expectancy for that student. More specifically, a deficiency slip should be sent when a student falls below a "C" level. The teacher should keep a copy of the deficiency slip on file.

Teachers are to send home progress reports for all students at the mid-term for each 9-week marking period.

Teachers are to keep official grades on the school's computer grade book. Teachers will be required to export their electronic grades to the school data clerk at the end of each marking period. Teachers need to keep a second hard copy available in a notebook grade book for back-up purposes.

Grades should be updated in Infinite Campus no less than once a week for parent and administrative review.

### **Guest Speakers**

Teachers are encouraged to utilize the expertise of people within the community as well as those outside the immediate area. Guest speakers are encouraged to order to enrich and enhance the instructional program.

Teachers planning a guest speaker must receive prior approval through the principal. Teachers should have guest speakers report first to the school office upon arriving at school.

## **Guidance Services**

The services provided by the counselor are an integral component of the total school curriculum. Through individual counseling, group and classroom guidance, and consultation with parents, staff and community support agencies, the counselor provides students with opportunities for social, personal, educational and career development.

Responsibilities of the guidance counselor will include, but will not be limited to the following:

- 1) Assist in the preparation of materials for orientation and registration of incoming sixth graders.
- 2) Coordination of orientation and registration for out-going eighth graders.
- 3) Provide individual and group counseling as needed.
- 4) Provide consultation to teams and Special Education teachers.
- 5) Serve as a liaison between parents and teachers.
- 6) Serve as a liaison for psychological testing services.
- 7) Schedule and attend, if needed, parent-teacher conferences.
- 8) Administer Georgia 411 Portfolio.
- 9) Serve as 504 Coordinator.
- 10) Assist with RTI Tier III.
- 11) Provide Character Education lessons.
- 12) Assist in planning student assemblies on topics such as being drug free, anti-bullying, etc.

**Supervision of the guidance program:** The principal will serve as the overall supervisor of the entire guidance program.

**Emergency Response:** Faculty and staff work with students on a daily basis and may be the first person to notice a change in the student's behavior. Please notify the counselor if you see a student experiencing these early warning signs:

- social withdrawal

- excessive feelings of isolation and being alone
- excessive feelings of rejection
- being a victim of violence
- feelings of being picked on and persecuted
- low school interest and poor academic performance
- expression of violence in writings and drawings
- uncontrolled anger
- patterns of impulsive and chronic hitting, intimidating and bullying behaviors
- history of discipline problems
- past history of violent and aggressive behavior
- intolerance for differences and prejudicial attitudes
- drug use and alcohol use
- affiliation with gangs
- inappropriate access to, possession of, and use of firearms
- serious threats of violence

None of these signs alone predict aggression and violence. A good rule of thumb is to assume that these warning signs, when presented in combination, indicate a need for further investigation. It is important to avoid inappropriately labeling or stigmatizing individual students because they appear to fit a specific profile or set of early-warning indicators. The warning signs are offered as an aid in identifying and referring children who may need help.

**Threats - An Important Warning Sign:** Of the students who have perpetrated school place violence, 93% made some type of threat before acting. All threats should be taken seriously, even if they sound ridiculous. If an individual continues to make threats after being warned to stop, there is a stronger case for that person's intent on committing violence unless there are enough impediments in the way.

Threats can be either verbal or written and fall into three categories: direct, conditional and veiled. If there is incongruence between a student's verbal and nonverbal signals, the nonverbal communication is always more reflective of the person's emotional state.

- **Direct threat** — A statement of clear intent to do harm to someone. There is no ambiguity or doubt (i.e., "I'm going to kill you" or "I'm going to blow them away.") A direct threat is punishable by law and authorities should be contacted. Those who make detailed threats are more likely to become violent than those who make vague threats.
- **Conditional threat** — A conditional threat is made contingent upon certain circumstances. They contain the words "if" and/or the word "or". These are designed to manipulate or intimidate the target into compliance. Examples include, "You better do this or you're dead," and



“If you don’t give me what I want, you will pay.” If these are not met with resistance or clear intolerance, they are likely to increase.

- **Veiled threat** — This is the hardest to address because it is usually vague and subject to interpretation. It is easily minimized by the perpetrator as they refute how the receiver interpreted the threat. They may state the recipient was blowing the situation out of proportion or they only intended the threat as a joke. Examples include, “I can see how something like the Jonesboro incident can happen. I’m surprised more kids don’t go off the edge,” or “I’m going to do something crazy tomorrow.” These are the most difficult to detect due to vagueness and multiple interpretations.

## **Homework**

The purpose of homework is to reinforce skills taught at school and to develop responsibility. At no time should homework be assigned that a child cannot do independently. All assignments should be checked for accuracy in a timely fashion. Each grade level should determine how homework grades will be calculated. Teachers should coordinate with each other to insure that excessive amounts of homework are not assigned on any given day.

PCMS has purchased agenda books for all students to assist them with organizing homework assignments. All teachers should remind students to write assignments in their agendas. If a student loses their agenda book, they may purchase another one in the front office for \$5.00.

## **Honor Roll**

Pickens County Middle School has two types of Honor Rolls. The Principal’s List student must achieve an “A” in each academic and Connections subject. The Honor Roll student must have an overall academic and connections course average 90 or above with no grade below an 80.

The Principal’s List and Honor Roll list will be posted in the main hall following each nine weeks grading period.

## **Lesson Plans**

Lesson plans should be created using the school district lesson plan template. Lesson plans for the week must be posted on the teacher’s website by 8:00 a.m. on Monday.

Teachers must submit emergency lesson plans for three days to the front office before the beginning of the first day of school.

## **Lockers**

Designated teachers will assign all students a hall locker. These teachers will keep a record of the student's locker number. Locks have been installed for security purposes on all student lockers. Students may not place other locks on lockers. Each student is responsible for the contents of his/her assigned locker and is expected to keep it in an orderly fashion. Students should not share lockers.

Teachers or the administration may inspect contents of lockers at any time. Students are not allowed to place stickers or pictures etc. on the outside or inside of the locker. Also, students may not write or mark on or in the lockers.

Damaged and/or dysfunctional lockers should be reported to the head custodian.

## **Mail**

All staff members are assigned a mailbox located in the school office. Mailboxes should be checked twice a day in the mornings upon arrival at school and during lunch. The front office will place daily notes in the teachers' boxes and forward student dismissal information e-mails at the end of the day to avoid classroom interruptions. Teachers need to check their e-mails shortly after 3 p.m. for student dismissal information.

## **Maintenance Procedures and Building Care**

Teachers are expected to supervise students in such a manner as to prohibit destruction and damage to school equipment and furniture. Seating arrangements should be such that students cannot easily damage walls, bulletin boards, etc. Also, students should be held responsible for the condition of their desks. Students should not be in the classroom during lunch or when the teacher is not present.

Keep all storage cabinets closed and locked when not in use. Storage cabinets should be kept neat and free from materials that may be a fire hazard. Supervise students so as to keep paper off the floor and out of their desks. Report any damaged or broken property immediately to the school office. Teachers are expected to leave their classroom in good order at the end of the school day.

Everyone must do their part in supervising the entire facility including the restrooms, corridors, cafeteria, and outside areas. School maintenance is a job that belongs to all of us. All custodial/maintenance requests must be directed to the chief custodian or assistant principal.

## **Media Center**

The media center operates on the “open” concept. Teachers are encouraged to work cooperatively with the media specialist as an extension of the team process. Students should be required to make extensive use of the media center and its resources.

In order to assist the media specialists in providing the necessary reference and research materials needed, as well as “free reading” materials, please fill out the Media Materials Request Form. This form should be given to the media specialist.

Media center guidelines are as follows:

- A) Students must have a pass to be in the media center.
- B) Teachers may send 3 to 5 students to the media center at a time.
- C) If a group of more than 5 needs to work on a project please arrange this with the media specialist prior to sending the students. Teachers must accompany their class to the media center.
- D) All media must be checked out properly before leaving the media center. NO EXCEPTIONS.
- E) A schedule will be made available for teachers to bring their entire class to the media center. Teachers should always accompany and supervise their classes while in the media center.
- F) Audio visual equipment should be scheduled at least a day in advance. All equipment should be returned to the media center at the end of each day or sooner. Students are not to operate any equipment without teacher supervision.
- G) Any meetings to be scheduled in the media center should be scheduled as far in advance as possible.
- H) Conference rooms should be scheduled with the media specialist.
- I) Copier and duplicator machines are available for use in the teacher workroom. Teachers are responsible for the use and area maintenance of these machines. No students are allowed in the teacher workroom unsupervised at any time.
- J) The media center will be open for use from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

- K) There are student fines for overdue books.
- L) Actual replacement cost is charged for all lost books or materials from the media center.

### **Non-renewal of Non-tenured Personnel**

A local school board may decline to issue a new contract to a teacher who has been employed less than 3 successive years without giving any reason for the non-renewal.

The teacher must be notified by the end of the school year that his/her contract will not be renewed, or he/she is automatically rehired.

Any teacher coming into a system with tenure from another system must be notified of any intent not to renew a contract before the end of the first year in the new system.

### **Non-renewal of Tenured Personnel**

A tenured teacher is defined as one who has completed more than three successive years of employment, or who has been issued a contract for the fourth year during his/her third year of successive employment.

Notification of non-renewal tenured personnel must be made prior to the end of the school year. The non-renewal teacher has the right to request reasons that his/her contract is not to be renewed. If the teacher requests reasons, the Board must provide reasons and notify the teacher of the date for a hearing regarding the non-renewal. The teacher has the right of appeal to the State Board of Education.

### **Planning Time**

Please adhere to the PCMS Meeting Schedule and PCMS Planning Schedule for grade level meetings, RTI meetings, and content area meetings with the Academic Coaches. Parent conferences, 504 meetings, IEP meetings, etc. should not be scheduled during the times that are set aside for grade level, RTI and content area meetings.

Also, please be aware that there may be times when you are needed to cover a class due to an emergency or a shortage of substitute teachers.

## **Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)**

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is an evidence-based, data-driven framework proven to reduce disciplinary incidents, increase a school's sense of safety and support improved academic outcomes. The premise of PBIS is that continual teaching, combined with acknowledgement or feedback of positive student behavior will reduce unnecessary discipline and promote a climate of greater productivity, safety and learning.

Students should be reminded regularly beginning with the first day of school, to "Be a Dragon: Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful."

The PCMS Code of Conduct/School Discipline Matrix should be utilized to determine appropriate consequences for undesirable behavior. Use Educators Handbook to document consequences imposed by the teacher and parent contacts made regarding behavior. Office referrals should be made using Educators Handbook. Students should not be sent to the office for disciplinary action unless an office referral has been made in Educators Handbook.

The PBIS Team will meet monthly to review discipline data and the effectiveness of the program and any changes/enhancements that need to be made. The team will also plan incentives/rewards for students who are demonstrating appropriate behaviors (i.e., hat day, crazy sock day, crazy hair day, Principals Celebrations, etc.).

In-School Suspension (ISS) can only be assigned by an administrator. When a student is assigned ISS, the following guidelines should be followed:

- 1) Assignments prepared for the student must be on the student's achievement level and must be of educational value. Educational value is construed not to mean "busy work", but work that is relevant to the student's class work.
- 2) A student must complete all work assigned on a daily basis while in the In-School Suspension program.
- 3) Any student who is absent while assigned to In-School Suspension must make up that day.
- 4) Teachers should pick up all work completed by a student in In-School Suspension at the end of the day and must provide the student with the next day's work at the beginning of the following morning.
- 5) The In-School Suspension program will be monitored by the principal or assistant principal.

- 6) A special education teacher will provide services to a special needs student during their time in ISS.

### **Professional Dress**

All staff members are expected to dress in an appropriate and professional manner at all times. Gentlemen should wear shirts with collars and should keep their shirttails tucked in with khakis or dress pants. Ladies should wear dresses, skirts or slacks. P.E. teachers may wear appropriate shorts and shirts for their activities.

Teachers, paraprofessionals and office staff should also abide by the student dress code regarding length of skirts, dresses, shoulder coverings, shirts over leggings, etc.

### **Professional Organizations**

Teachers have a number of professional organizations available to them. Two of the organizations are GAE and PAGE. Dues for the organizations may be paid through payroll deductions.

### **Promotion and Retention**

The student promotion/retention policy at Pickens County Middle School is governed by the state and local board policy. To be promoted to the next grade level, students in grades 6-8 must pass year-long language arts, reading, and math classes, and may not fail more than one core academic class (e.g. science, social studies, or averaged final grade from each connections class). A student's final grade in each connection classes (e.g. art, band, chorus, etc.) will be averaged to equate one core academic class.

Students who do not meet these promotion criteria will be required to successfully complete a credit recovery or summer school program (if available) of studies. If the student does not successfully complete the assigned credit recovery or summer school program, the decision to promote or retain the student will be made by a school placement committee.

A placement committee is composed of the principal or his/her designee, a parent or guardian of the student, and an academic subject area teacher. A decision to place the student in the next grade level must be a unanimous decision of the placement committee.

When it is necessary to address the question of promotion or retention, the decision should be based primarily on whether it appears that the individual student's total development will be enhanced more by retention or promotion.

Any student in grades 6-8 who is retained or does not meet the criteria for promotion to the next grade level, but is assigned to the next grade level by a placement committee will be closely monitored through the RTI process.

## **PTSA**

Teachers are encouraged to join PTSA and attend PTSA meetings/events during the year. Membership in PTSA is \$5.00. Our PTSA board works hard to raise funds to help our school; your support of their efforts will be appreciated.

## **Reimbursement**

In order to be reimbursed for purchases, you must adhere to the following guidelines:

- 1) Any expenditure must receive prior approval from the principal.
- 2) Prior to the purchase, you must notify the secretary of the purchase you will be making and let her know that it has been approved by the principal.
- 3) Obtain the appropriate reimbursement forms from the secretary.
- 4) Receipts or invoices are necessary for reimbursements to be made.
- 5) Sales tax is not generally reimbursed. Tax-exempt certificates are available from the secretary/bookkeeper's office.

## **Requisitioning of Supplies and Equipment**

- 1) Discuss purchase requests that exceed your budget approved allotment with the principal.
- 2) Complete a P.O. requisition form located in the forms file in the mailroom and return to the secretary.
- 3) After approval from the principal, a purchase order will be prepared and executed. The teacher will be notified if the request is not approved.
- 4) Upon receipt of materials from vendor, check contents against the packing slip. **If all is in order, sign the packing slip and return to the secretary.** This will authorize payment of the invoice.
- 5) **No bill will be paid unless backed by purchase order, invoice and packing slip.**

- 6) **No teacher will place an order for materials, supplies, or equipment without prior approval. Teachers making such purchases shall bear full responsibility for payment.**

### **Reservation for Use of School Facility**

Contact the Assistant Principal to reserve any part of the school facility. Upon approval, have the secretary list the event and location on the school calendar.

### **Resignation**

An employee, who wishes to resign after his/her contract has been signed or during the contract term, must request that the Board of Education release him/her from the contract.

The school board then has the option of releasing or not releasing the employee. Of course, the Board cannot compel an employee to fulfill a contract. However, if the Board does not release a certified employee and the employee does not fulfill the contract the board can petition the Georgia Professional Standards Commission to revoke that teacher's certificate.

### **Response to Intervention (RTI)**

Response to Intervention (RTI) is at the core of school improvement-- to make sure we reach all students, especially those whose academic skills or behaviors are not up to expectations. The RTI Coordinator will meet bi-weekly with grade levels during their planning to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions being used, document progress and discuss additional interventions if needed. The Assistant Principal will serve as the RTI Coordinator.

Once students reach Tier III in the RTI process, the school counselor should be notified so that she can review the data which has been collected and begin the referral process if appropriate.

### **Adapting Your Classroom for Slow Learners, Students with ADD/ADHD, and Students with Specific Learning Disabilities**

- Allow the student(s) to work on an assignment for short periods of time followed by a different type of activity.
- Break assignments into smaller, more manageable parts. For example, have them complete a section of a worksheet rather than the entire worksheet;



with large projects, give due dates for small portions of the assignment to avoid causing the student to feel overwhelmed. Some students need more assistance than others in breaking activities down into smaller pieces.

- Adjust assignments and work time. Shortening assignments is good when the whole class is going to move on to a new topic. Circle the most crucial items for practice and allow the student to complete those. This will enable the student to move on with the rest of the class. For lengthy assignments and book reports, provide additional time. Remember, some students require more structure than others.
- Set up a consistent schedule/routine in the classroom.
- To improve attention and motivation, alternate quiet and active tasks.

### **Learning styles:**

- Auditory —
  - Give verbal as well as written directions.
  - Give oral rather than written tests (at times).
  - Allow students to learn new information from a recording.
  - Allow the student to read important information aloud to himself/herself or to another student.
- Visual —
  - Use flashcards printed on bright colors.
  - Use graphic organizers to teach students new concepts and information. This helps them to visualize the information and organize it cognitively.
  - Provide visual cues throughout the classroom for verbal directions.
  - Pair visual learners with auditory learners. The visual learner can read to the auditory learner.
  - Allow written reports or projects in lieu of oral presentations.
- Kinesthetic —
  - Use classroom demonstrations whenever possible.
  - Allow the student to build models, make charts, etc., in lieu of writing reports.
  - Teach the student to take notes.
  - Allow the student to doodle or draw while listening. Some students require the movement to enhance concentration. Call on the student frequently to ensure attention and comprehension.

### **Learning Environment:**

- Provide a work area free from distractions (i.e., pencil sharpener, high traffic areas, windows, etc.).
- Play classical music quietly in the classroom. Some students need the extra input to allow them to concentrate. Seat students who might find this distracting away from the music. Music can also serve as a calming device for active students.
- Place the student close to you for immediate help and increased monitoring. Teachers can also use proximity control by walking around the room frequently rather than remaining in one place.

**Materials:**

- Help students organize materials through color coding, increased monitoring, use of dividers, dating papers, checking agenda books, etc. Some students may require more monitoring for a greater length of time than others. Use peer helpers when appropriate.

**Presentation:**

- Give both oral and written directions.
- Check student's understanding by having them repeat directions.
- Make note-taking adjustments. Use graphic organizers and structured note-taking strategies such as outlines, Q & A formats, etc. to increase independence in note-taking. Some students may need extra time, copies of notes, etc.
- Print or type (12 point font or higher) materials for students to read.
- Allow for plenty of "white" space in worksheets. For some students, small words that take up every inch of space on a paper appears cluttered and disorganized making it difficult for them to locate important information.

**Evaluation:**

- Give a variety of types of assessments (i.e., oral presentation, project, essay, multiple choice, short response, etc.).
- Provide some opportunities for students to choose an evaluation method.
- Near progress report and report card time, provide the student with a specific list of what must be done to bring up a grade. If it is a lengthy list, break it into smaller parts with deadlines for each part.

## **School Hours**

The professional workday hours are 7:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. All staff members are expected to be in their classrooms at 7:45 a.m. with the exception of teachers with morning supervision duties. Teachers with morning supervision duties will begin the workday at 7:30 a.m. The school office hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

## **School Visitors**

All visitors are required to sign-in at the school office and receive a visitor's badge. According to Board policy, students may not have visitors at school.

## **Special Education**

In compliance with I.D.E.A., Pickens County Middle School provides appropriate special services for all students who qualify. All students with

disabilities and special needs are provided services through the Pickens County School District. These services may include a 504 Accommodation Plan and/or Special Education Services. Delivery models at PCMS include co-taught, resource and self-contained. Teachers must be knowledgeable of all students with special needs and must provide the services stated in the 504 Plan, IEP, or Behavior Intervention Plan. The following information provides an overview of the responsibilities of the regular education teacher for students with special needs.

**Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973:**

- prohibits discrimination against persons with a handicap in any program receiving federal financial assistance (public schools)
- defines a person with a handicap as anyone who has a mental or physical impairment, which substantially limits one or more major life activities, one of which is learning according to recent interpretation of the act
- is enforced by the Office of Civil Rights
- requires a 504 Accommodations Plan designed for each student based on individual need
- provides no additional funding
- addresses students who have:
  - communicable diseases
  - chronic medical conditions (sickly cell anemia, asthma, seizure disorders)
  - temporary medical conditions due to illness or accident
  - attention deficit disorder
  - behavioral disorders (depression, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, anxiety disorders, etc.)
  - drug/alcohol addiction
  - other conditions as deemed appropriate

Regular education teachers provide accommodations for students with 504 plans in regular classroom settings. Should these accommodations not meet the student's needs, the regular classroom teacher should notify the guidance counselor.

**Special Education Services and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

IDEA was designed to provide additional educational and related services to students with disabilities so that they may progress in the least restrictive environment.

IDEA requires:

- specially designed instruction (as deemed appropriate) and an Individual Education Plan (IEP)

- provides funding through the state to ensure adequate and appropriate services for disabled students
- serves all school-aged children up to 21 years of age who fall within one or more specific categories of qualifying conditions. These categories include: speech/language impaired, learning disability, emotional disability, other health impaired, visually impaired, hearing impaired, mental disability, orthopedically impaired, preschool child with a disability (developmentally delayed), autism, traumatic brain injury, deaf, blind and multiple disabilities.
- requires a full comprehensive evaluation and reevaluation every three years
- requires an annual review each year
- has due process procedures
- is monitored by the State Department of Education

The IEP is a written document of goals, objectives and accommodations for each individual student. An IEP meeting must be held to discuss, change or amend the IEP in any way. This includes change of placement, reevaluation, determination of need, changing hours, or addition of or modification to a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP).

An Eligibility Team meeting to discuss/change/modify the IEP must include the following members: special education teacher, regular education teacher, local education agent, parent, and other qualified professionals as deemed appropriate.

All of the student's teachers should be thoroughly knowledgeable about the contents of the IEP. If you have questions about where to locate this information or BIP information, please see the Special Education Lead Teacher immediately.

It is important to remember that a student's IEP is a legal contract that the school district has made with the parents. Implementation of the IEP is the responsibility of both the regular education teachers and the special education teachers. If general education teachers have questions or concerns about an IEP, he/she should contact the special education teacher with those concerns.

### **Student Early Check-Out**

Students will be released prior to 3:40 p.m. according to the following guidelines:

- 1) Students leaving with an adult **other than the parent or legal guardian** should bring a written note from the parent or legal guardian stating the time the student should be released from school and the name of the person picking the student up. The note must be sent to the front office

as soon as possible and the parent/guardian called to verify. Upon the arrival of the above-mentioned adult, the student will be called from class.

- 2) Students will be allowed to leave early without a note only if the parent or legal guardian comes into the school office and checks the student out personally.
- 3) STUDENTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO WAIT OUTSIDE TO BE PICKED UP FOR ANY REASON.

## **Student Handbook and Code of Conduct**

All teachers are responsible for following the procedures outlined in the PCMS Student Handbook and Pickens County Schools Code of Conduct.

### **Taking Attendance**

Homeroom teachers will take attendance each morning at 8:10 a.m. using Infinite Campus. Teachers are to record absences only; tardies will be entered in the office. **It is imperative that teachers keep an accurate record of student attendance.**

**Attendance should be kept for each block everyday** using a spreadsheet or roll book for recording absences and tardies.

Students, who have been absent, or upon returning to school, are required to furnish a note, which must contain the following information:

- 1) The reason the student was absent
- 2) The number of days and dates of the absence
- 3) Student's first and last name
- 4) Parent's signature

It is the responsibility of the student to bring this note to the attendance clerk the morning of his/her return to school. Any student should check in with the school attendance clerk before going to class. All notes for absences brought in by students become the property of the school and will be kept on file with the attendance clerk.

According with Georgia Compulsory School Attendance Law, lawful absences are as follows:

- 1) Personal illness
- 2) Serious illness or death in the immediate family
- 3) Religious holidays

- 4) Absences mandated by a governmental agency (ex. summons for court)
- 5) Military leave for immediate family

All other absences are considered unexcused.

It is suggested that teachers call parents after any absence if the teacher feels there is just cause.

## **Teacher Evaluations**

The Pickens County School System utilizes the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) for teacher evaluations. The Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) is comprised of three components which contribute to an overall Teacher Effectiveness Measure (TEM): Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS), Surveys of Instructional Practice (student perception surveys), and Student Growth (SGP and SLO).

### **Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS):**

- TAPS provides evaluators with a qualitative, rubrics-based evaluation method by which they can measure teacher performance related to quality Performance Standards.
- Observations by a credentialed evaluator, including four walkthroughs and two formative observations as well as documentation of a teacher's practice, shall inform two Formative Assessments and one Summative Performance Evaluation each year.
- All ten TAPS Performance Standards shall be rated on the two Formative Assessments and the one Summative Performance Evaluation.

### **Student Surveys of Instructional Practice (student perception surveys):**

- Student surveys shall be administered annually to gather perception data regarding teacher practice.
- Student survey results will inform the rating of Performance Standards 3, 4, 7, and 8 on the Formative Assessment, if available.
- Student survey results shall inform the rating of Performance Standards 3, 4, 7, and 8 on the Summative Performance Evaluation.

### **Student Growth (SGP and SLO)**

- **Student Growth Percentile Measures:** For teachers of tested subjects (4th - 8th grade CRCT and high school EOCT), this component is comprised of a student growth percentile/value-added measure which shall be calculated annually for student growth based on state assessment data.
- **Student Learning Objective Measures:** For teachers of non-tested subjects whose students are not assessed using state assessments, this component is comprised of LEA developed and DOE approved Student Learning Objectives. Student growth shall be calculated annually based on SLO assessment data.
- For teachers of both tested and non-tested subjects, the Student Growth

component shall be calculated as a combined measure.

- Student Growth Data shall be a lagging measure; when available, the prior year's growth measures will inform the current annual Summative Performance Evaluation.

## **Teacher Liability and Supervision of Students**

Teachers are legally responsible for the safety of their students when the students are in their care. Supervision of students includes common areas such as the cafeteria, hallways, and restrooms. Students should never be left alone unsupervised. Students should only be allowed to leave the classroom with an appropriate signed agenda. One student at a time should be allowed to use the restroom unless closely supervised by a PCMS staff member.

Following are a few important procedures for your protection:

- Do not leave your classroom unattended. If you must leave, get another teacher to cover your class. Even if it is for a short trip to the copy machine or the restroom, leaving students by themselves is a substantial risk.
- Be at your duty station on time and stay for the assigned time. If your name is on the schedule, you are responsible for serving the duty or getting someone else to cover it for you.
- Post your classroom rules in a conspicuous place. Students should have easy access to information regarding the behavior teachers expect in their class.
- Post fire/tornado drill information in a conspicuous place.
- Provide appropriate instruction. Teach and practice classroom procedures and review them often. If you have lab equipment (tools, machines, test equipment, etc.) in your classroom/lab, provide students with appropriate instruction as to proper, safe use. Document in your lesson plans when you provided this instruction.
- Maintain confidentiality. Do not discuss an individual student's performance or behavior with another student or anyone who is not a direct family member. Student performance/behavior should only be discussed with a student's parent or legal guardian.
- Follow the school discipline matrix. For the student's safety and yours, do not send students to the hall or any other area of the building without supervision.
- Exercise great care in touching students in any fashion. In today's society, it is an unfortunate reality that well-meant gestures may be misconstrued. Do not be alone with individual students. Report any potential problems immediately.

## **Telephone Use**

Each classroom area is provided with a telephone/intercom. These telephones are provided for school use only. Personal calls should not be made from these telephones except when absolutely necessary.

Teachers may call another teacher's room or the school office by dialing that extension number. Teachers should not allow students to use the phones in their classroom without administrative approval. Students who are sick should report to the school nurse's office.

**Teacher and staff cell phones need to be muted or turned off during instructional time to maximize the quality of instruction for the students. Teachers should not use cell phones during instructional time or at any time while supervising students.**

## **Terms of Employment**

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT - Employees under contract may be terminated or suspended or demoted for these reasons:

1) Incompetence; 2) Insubordination; 3) Willful neglect of duties; 4) Immorality; 5) Inciting, encouraging, or counseling students to violate any state law, municipal ordinance, or policy or rule of the local Board of Education; 6) Reduction in staff due to the loss of students or cancellation of programs; 7) Failure to secure and maintain necessary educational certification and training; 8) Any other good and sufficient cause.

Employees under a contract have a property right in their jobs and therefore, must be given full procedural due process before the decision is made to terminate or demote during their contract term. At least 10 days before a hearing the employee must be provided with written notice of: 1) The cause or causes for his/her discharge or demotion; 2) The name of the witnesses and a concise summary of the evidence to be used against him/her; 3) The time and place where the hearing will be held; 4) Notification that the charged employee, upon request, shall be furnished with compulsory process or subpoena legally requiring the attendance of the witnesses and the production of documents in any other papers as provided by law.

Additional Items:

1) Data Ethics – Teachers need to abide by the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators (standard 7) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).



2) Child Abuse Reporting Procedures – At the beginning of the school year, all PCMS staff must undergo training provided by central office and the school administration over the current child abuse reporting procedures as mandated by the local school board and district attorney’s office. Please see school board policy JGI (revised August 12, 2010).

3) Racial/ Sexual Harassment – Teachers and staff must report any allegations regarding possible racial and sexual harassment to the school administration. The school administration is required to conduct a joint investigation with the Title IX coordinator to determine appropriate actions.

### **Textbooks**

Teachers are responsible for the accounting of all issued textbooks and should account for the final number of books returned.

### **Tobacco Use**

Per Pickens County School Board Policy GAN, no student, staff member or school visitor is permitted to use any tobacco product at any time, including non-school hours 24 hours per day, 7 days per week while:

- In any building, facility, or vehicle owned, leased, rented or chartered by the Pickens County School System;
- On any school grounds and property – including athletic fields and parking lots – owned, leased, rented or chartered by the Pickens County School System; or
- At any school-sponsored or school-related event on-campus or off-campus.
- Volunteers and visitors on school property will be reminded of this policy in a tactful and courteous manner and will be asked to adhere to this policy.

# Code of Ethics for Educators

Source: Georgia Professional Standards Commission Website (6-15-11)

Effective October 15, 2009

## 505-6-.01 THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS

**(1) Introduction.** The Code of Ethics for Educators defines the professional behavior of educators in Georgia and serves as a guide to ethical conduct. The Professional Standards Commission has adopted standards that represent the conduct generally accepted by the education profession. The code defines unethical conduct justifying disciplinary sanction and provides guidance for protecting the health, safety and general welfare of students and educators, and assuring the citizens of Georgia a degree of accountability within the education profession.

### **(2) Definitions**

(a) "Certificate" refers to any teaching, service, or leadership certificate, license, or permit issued by authority of the Professional Standards Commission.

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

(c) "Student" is any individual enrolled in the state's public or private schools from preschool through grade 12 or any individual under the age of 18. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct for Educators, the enrollment period for a graduating student ends on August 31 of the year of graduation.

(d) "Complaint" is any written and signed statement from a local board, the state board, or one or more individual residents of this state filed with the Professional Standards Commission alleging that an educator has breached one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators. A "complaint" will be deemed a request to investigate.

(e) "Revocation" is the invalidation of any certificate held by the educator.

(f) "Denial" is the refusal to grant initial certification to an applicant for a certificate.

(g) "Suspension" is the temporary invalidation of any certificate for a period of time specified by the Professional Standards Commission.

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

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

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

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

### **(3) Standards**

(a) Standard 1: **Legal Compliance** - An educator shall abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to the commission or conviction of a felony or of any crime involving moral turpitude; of any other criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, trafficking, sale, or possession of a controlled substance or marijuana as provided for in Chapter 13 of Title 16; or of any other sexual offense as provided for in Code Section 16-6-1 through 16-6-17, 16-6-20, 16-6-22.2, or 16-12-100; or any other laws applicable to the profession. As used herein, conviction includes a finding or verdict of guilty, or a plea of *nolo contendere*, regardless of whether an appeal of the conviction has been sought; a situation where first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt pursuant to the charge was granted; and a situation where an adjudication of guilt or sentence was

otherwise withheld or not entered on the charge or the charge was otherwise disposed of in a similar manner in any jurisdiction.

(b) Standard 2: **Conduct with Students** - An educator shall always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. committing any act of child abuse, including physical and verbal abuse;
2. committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment;
3. committing any sexual act with a student or soliciting such from a student;
4. engaging in or permitting harassment of or misconduct toward a student that would violate a state or federal law;
5. soliciting, encouraging, or consummating an inappropriate written, verbal, electronic, or physical relationship with a student;
6. furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student; or
7. failing to prevent the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs by students who are under the educator's supervision (including but not limited to at the educator's residence or any other private setting).

(c) Standard 3: **Alcohol or Drugs** - An educator shall refrain from the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs during the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. being on school premises or at a school-related activity while under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs; and
2. being on school premises or at a school-related activity involving students while under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcohol. A school-related activity includes, but is not limited to, any activity sponsored by the school or school system (booster clubs, parent-teacher organizations, or any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum i.e. Foreign Language trips, etc).

(d) Standard 4: **Honesty** - An educator shall exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to, falsifying, misrepresenting or omitting:

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

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

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

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

1. soliciting students or parents of students to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee;
2. accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest;

3. tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee; and
4. coaching, instructing, promoting athletic camps, summer leagues, etc. that involves students in an educator's school system and from whom the educator receives remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee. These types of activities must be in compliance with all rules and regulations of the Georgia High School Association.

(g) **Standard 7: Confidential Information** - An educator shall comply with state and federal laws and state school board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material and other information. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

(k) **Standard 11: Testing** - An educator shall administer state-mandated assessments fairly and ethically. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

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

#### **(4) Reporting**

(a) Educators are required to report a breach of one or more of the Standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator

became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. Educators should be aware of legal requirements and local policies and procedures for reporting unethical conduct. Complaints filed with the Professional Standards Commission must be in writing and must be signed by the complainant (parent, educator, personnel director, superintendent, etc.).

(b) The Commission notifies local and state officials of all disciplinary actions. In addition, suspensions and revocations are reported to national officials, including the NASDTEC Clearinghouse.

### **(5) Disciplinary Action**

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

1. unethical conduct as outlined in The Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-10 (PSC Rule 505-6-.01);
2. disciplinary action against a certificate in another state on grounds consistent with those specified in the Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-10 (PSC Rule 505-6-.01);
3. order from a court of competent jurisdiction or a request from the Department of Human Resources that the certificate should be suspended or the application for certification should be denied for non-payment of child support (O.C.G.A. §19-6-28.1 and §19-11-9.3);
4. notification from the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation that the educator is in default and not in satisfactory repayment status on a student loan guaranteed by the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation (O.C.G.A. §20-3-295);
5. suspension or revocation of any professional license or certificate;
6. violation of any other laws and rules applicable to the profession; and
7. any other good and sufficient cause that renders an educator unfit for employment as an educator.

(b) An individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended may not serve as a volunteer or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher or in any other position during the period of his or her revocation, suspension or denial for a violation of The Code of Ethics. The superintendent and the superintendent's designee for certification shall be 505-6-.02 Page 6 responsible for assuring that an individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district. Both the superintendent and the superintendent's designee must hold GaPSC certification.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200; 20-2-981 through 20-2-984.5