



# EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK 2013-2014

**MR. MICHAEL THURMOND, INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT**  
**NEW LEADERSHIP \* NEW VISION \* NEW DIRECTION**

# DEKALB COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

## EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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Dear DeKalb County School District Employees,

## **Welcome to the 2013-2014 school year!**

We are embarking on a journey like never before. You have been selected to take part in this fantastic voyage, so welcome aboard. Our core business is teaching and learning, and we believe the quality of our personnel is the most important factor in providing a quality education for the students of our community. Through our contributions, every child can and will be successful.

During the first few months on the job, I had a unique opportunity to engage a cross section of DeKalb County School District stakeholders in open, honest and frank discussions. Additionally, I worked in partnership with Chairman Melvin Johnson and the members of the DeKalb County School Board to research, evaluate, and review student achievement data, policies and processes, budget resources, organizational culture and structure. One conclusion gleaned from my efforts is incontrovertible. DCSD assets far outweigh our deficits and the opportunities for growth are limitless.

We will learn from our past mistakes, but will not dwell upon them. We will demonstrate significant institutional progress to AdvancED/SACS monitors, balance the FY 2014 budget prioritize student academic achievement and career readiness, strengthen parent, adult guardian and mentor involvement; develop and implement a plan that will improve operational efficiency throughout the district; and continue to rebuild trust with internal and external district stakeholders.

Moving forward we will continue to build consensus and establish mutually beneficial partnerships with stakeholders throughout DeKalb County. We were once and will again be recognized as an elite public school district. I am convinced that our best days are yet to come.

Again, welcome!

***Michael L. Thurmond***  
Interim Superintendent

The Division of Human Resources is pleased to provide the information outlined in this Employee Handbook. This handbook provides information on employment services, benefits, certification, compensation and classification, leaves and attendance, and personnel records. The content listed herein supersedes all previous handbooks, pamphlets, manuals, statements, or other representations (written or oral) regarding the term, conditions, and nature of a person's employment with the District. Nothing in this handbook or in the District's policy manual shall be deemed to constitute an expressed or implied contract of employment.

This handbook and any policies, procedures, and benefits to which it refers may be modified, altered, or discontinued at any time by the District at the discretion of the Board and/or Superintendent. New for this year are the **Board of Education Policy GAGD regarding Nepotism** and the Relative Disclosure Process. Please review this policy in its entirety by clicking on the link below.

No handbook can include or anticipate every issue, question, or concern that may arise; therefore, employees are encouraged to check the District's webpage and complete listing of policies for any updates to personnel information, forms, procedures, and practices. This handbook is not intended to replace the policies established by the DeKalb County Board of Education ("Board") or the District administration. Employees have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with and abide by the complete policies and procedures of the Board to carry out their assigned responsibilities with conscientious concern and professional behavior. A complete listing of Board policies can be located at the following link:

<https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/epolicy/Policyoverview.aspx?S=4054&Sch=4054>

All employees are responsible for understanding the contents contained in this handbook as well as all policies and administrative regulations of the District.

Keeping children first,

***Dr. Tekshia Ward-Smith***  
Chief Human Resource Officer

## **OUR VISION**

The DeKalb County School District is one of the leading, high-performing, metropolitan school systems in the United States in preparing students to lead and succeed in a rapidly changing world.

## **OUR MISSION**

Our mission is to prepare 21st century students to thrive and succeed in a diverse and ever-changing world through a partnership of homes, schools, and communities.

## **WE BELIEVE**

- Our core business is student achievement and preparedness for post-secondary education, careers, or service
- Learning is a shared responsibility of schools, parents, and communities for which we are all accountable
- All students will learn and must be challenged and supported to achieve at their highest levels
- Schools should be safe, nurturing, and supportive environments
- A culture of accountability and transparency with appropriate checks and balances is necessary for our District to deliver exceptional customer service and to achieve operational excellence
- Diversity is an asset that we embrace and promote
- Effective teaching and strong instructional leadership have a profound impact on student potential and are vital to the success of our community
- Every school is unique and must have quality resources that are aligned to teaching and learning
- An effective teacher is equipped with instructional knowledge and research-based practices and is committed to continuous professional learning
- All District employees should be appropriately recognized and celebrated for their impact on our students and their success

We must make all schools places where learning has no limits. The graduating class of 2017, along with all classes before and after, will be ready to take its rightful place among the leaders of its time.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT**

It is the policy of the Board not to discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, color, religion, national origin, or disability in its educational programs, activities, and employment practices.

## EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Employment Services is dedicated to staffing the District's schools and centers with the most qualified individuals. Our mission is to provide a highly qualified teacher for each classroom, qualified support staff for each position, and exceptional customer service to support the educational process.

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### AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT

Georgia recognizes the doctrine of employment at will. Thus, unless issued a Board-approved employment contract, all District employees may be terminated at the will of the employer.

### CALL CENTER

The District's Call Center is available Monday - Friday from 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m. to assist and provide support for all inquiries regarding the District. Individuals requiring assistance should direct all inquires to 678-676-1200.

### CONDUCTING PERSONAL BUSINESS

The established hours of duty may not be used for conducting personal business. *Violators will be addressed accordingly.*

### CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

A criminal background check will be conducted at or prior to employment for every individual who is employed by the Board to fill either a full-time or a part-time position with the District.

For initial hiring purposes, personnel employed by the District shall be fingerprinted and have a criminal background check as required by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-211.1(c). A clearance certificate verifying a satisfactory criminal background

check may be required based on the requirements of state law and the rules of the Professional Standards Commission.

Subsequent criminal background checks shall be conducted on all personnel. Certified personnel, whose employment is continued with the District, shall be subject to a criminal background check upon any certificate renewal application to the Professional Standards Commission.

All other employees of the District, whose employment is continued and who are not certificated personnel, shall be subject to subsequent criminal background checks on a periodic basis determined by procedures and schedules established by the Superintendent or his/her designee. The period between criminal background checks shall not exceed a maximum of five years.

At the discretion of the Board, fees required for a criminal background checks shall be paid by the Board, the individual seeking employment, or the employee.

### DRUG-FREE WORK PLACE

In accordance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 the Board hereby declares that, with respect to all DCSD employees, the manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, use or being Under the Influence of a Controlled Substance is strictly prohibited in the workplace, while on DCSD property, while in or operating DCSD vehicles, or in private vehicles on



DCSD properties or work sites. Moreover, for all DCSD employees, the purchase, possession or ingestion of, or being Under the Influence of Alcohol while in the workplace, while on DCSD property, while in or operating DCSD vehicles or pieces of heavy equipment or in private vehicles on DCSD properties or work sites is also strictly prohibited. Entities contracting with the Board shall ensure a drug-free workplace, as a condition of the contract.

## **EMERGENCY CONTACTS**

A completed Employee Information Data Sheet is required to be on file from each staff member. Changes in emergency data should be reported promptly to your supervisor or designee.

## **EMPLOYEE COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES**

All certified employees shall have the right to present and resolve complaints relating to certain matters affecting the employment relationship at the lowest organizational level possible. The DeKalb County Board of Education encourages all employees to resolve complaints informally in a spirit of collegiality whenever possible. Please refer to Board Policy GAE for a complete description of the Employee Complaints and Grievances Policy.

## **EMPLOYEE ASSIGNMENTS**

Employees are assigned to positions based on the needs of the District and the employee's certification, qualifications, and training. The Superintendent shall have the authority to reassign any employee for the efficient operation or for the best interest of the District.

## **EMPLOYEE DRESS CODE**

All District employees shall dress in a professional manner and style in accordance with the dress of other professionals within the community. Employees are expected to be clean, neat, and appropriately dressed at all times during the employee's regular hours of work.

The Superintendent, Principals, and Site Administrators have the authority to interpret the dress code and make a case-by-case determination of the appropriateness of dress and appearance.

Any employee whose attire or dress is not professional in the opinion of the Superintendent, Principal, or Site Administrator shall be directed to conform to the dress code. An employee, who is inappropriately dressed, may be sent home and required to return to work in acceptable attire. The employee shall not be paid for time away from work.

## **EMPLOYEE EVALUATION**

### CERTIFIED PERSONNEL

All certified leadership teaching, and service personnel will be evaluated annually for performance appraisal and professional development purposes.

The annual written evaluation will be based on performance and the job description for the position. The appropriate Board approved evaluation instruments shall be used to assess the performance of professional personnel.

Prior to April 1 of each school year, an opportunity must be provided for the evaluator(s) and the evaluatee(s) to discuss the results of the evaluation.

## CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL

All classified personnel employed by the Board shall be evaluated at least once each year. The process and the frequency of the evaluations, the instruments used, and the training of the evaluators shall be established by the Superintendent. All evaluations shall be discussed confidentially with the employee.

## **EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION CARDS AND BADGES**

In order to ensure the safety and security of both staff and students, District ID Badges should be clearly visible at all times. Additionally, employees will be issued a key access card to their location. Please contact your supervisor as soon you discover your access card is missing. The access card must be deactivated and new card will be issued. The cost is \$10.00 to replace the access card and \$5.00 for a new employee I.D. card. Employees should contact the Department of Public Safety at 678-676-1810 to secure a new I.D. card.

## **FAIR DISMISSAL ACT**

Teachers and other contractual personnel shall be demoted, relieved from duty, have contracts terminated, or have contracts non-renewed in accordance with due process procedures provided under the Fair Dismissal Act of Georgia. Please refer to O.C.G.A. 20-2-940 for additional information.

## **HIRING**

The Superintendent shall have the authority to place personnel in accordance with Board policies, adopted job classifications and salary schedules, and in such numbers authorized by the Board, provided that,

placements at the level of executive director or above must be approved by the Board.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURES**

In case of an emergency school closure or schedule change, staff reporting instructions are issued via FirstClass or on the District's website. Additionally, employees may call 678-676-1200 for additional information when a school day is canceled because of inclement weather or other emergency conditions, the Superintendent shall have authority to reschedule the day within the annual period of time scheduled for the work calendar.

## **INTERVIEWING**

Human Resources and/or the supervisor of the position(s) will interview the most qualified applicants. Human Resources will extend the offer of employment based on the recommendation of the supervisor for the position provided the applicant has met all qualifications and requirements of the position.

## **JOB POSTING**

Announcements of job vacancies will be posted electronically via the District's website at [www.pats.dekalb.k12.ga.us](http://www.pats.dekalb.k12.ga.us). Job vacancies will be posted for a minimum of five business days or until filled.

## **NEPOTISM**

Employees cannot recommend for employment as a direct report, supervise or evaluate members of their immediate family.

## **OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT**

Employees may, during the times not required of them to fulfill assigned duties,

engage in other employment, provided such employment does not violate any pertinent section of this policy, Board Policy “Code of Ethics,” Descriptor Code “GBU,” or any contract the employee has with the District.

Whether on pre-approved, scheduled or unpaid leave of absence status, approved by the Superintendent, District employees are reminded that their job assignments within the District are their first obligation and, if outside employment is taking time or energy from this position or affecting their performance, they will be asked to choose one or the other.

Additionally, employees are required to disclose, in writing, to the District if they are employed by a vendor approved to do business with the District. This notification should be sent to Chief Human Resources Officer. Failure to disclose this information may result in disciplinary action, up to and including, termination.

## **PATS APPLICATION PROCESS**

Applicants may apply for positions of interest using the **Paperless Application Tracking System** (PATS) at [www.pats.dekalb.k12.ga.us](http://www.pats.dekalb.k12.ga.us). Applicants will receive email notifications regarding the status of their application. Additionally, an applicant may check his/her online portfolio in order to see the status of the application, the arrival of documents, and the postings for which he/she has applied.

Completed instructional applications will remain in the PATS database for a period of 12 months, beginning with the day the application was submitted. Thirty (30) days prior to application’s expiration date, the applicant will be notified by email to renew the application. Please note that applications are only allowed to be renewed once. If not

renewed, the application will be removed from the system. A new application will be required to be considered for additional employment opportunities.

Completed non-instructional applications will remain in the PATS database for a period of 6 months, beginning with the day the application was submitted. Thirty days prior to the application’s expiration date, the applicant will be notified by email to renew the application. Please note that applications are only allowed to be renewed once. If not renewed, the application will be removed from the system. A new application will be required to be considered for additional employment opportunities.

## **PATS SUPPORT**

Human Resources is available to assist and provide technical support to applicants regarding the PATS application process, and position requirements. Individuals requiring assistance should direct all inquires to 678-676-0005.

## **REFERENCES ON PATS**

Satisfactory references are required for each prospective employee, as well as for current employees applying for promotions. References are valid for only one year. Personal references will not be accepted.

### PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES FOR INSTRUCTIONAL POSITIONS

If an applicant has less than two years of teaching experience, reference forms should be provided from those directly involved in his/her student teaching experience, i.e., school principal, cooperating teacher, and/or college supervisor. If an applicant has one or more years of teaching experience, reference forms should be provided from all

principals and/or school administrators under whose authority they taught.

### EXTERNAL APPLICANTS AND NON-INSTRUCTIONAL POSITIONS

One reference form must be completed by the applicant's current supervisor. The remaining reference forms must be completed by the applicant's former supervisors from two previous places of employment. If the applicant has limited or no previous work experience, reference forms should be completed by individuals who can provide the most accurate information regarding the applicant's work abilities.

### **REASSIGNMENT**

Employees may be reassigned by the Superintendent to meet the needs of the District. Reasons for reassignment may include, but are not limited to, reorganization, certification, opening and closing of schools, and changes in attendance zones, approved programs, or student enrollment.

### **RECRUITMENT**

The District's active recruitment process is designed to attract and retain competent and qualified personnel. A current list of employment opportunities is available on PATS. Employment opportunities are also posted with various career centers at colleges and universities, advertisement venues, websites, and media outlets including newspapers, magazines, and journals. Human Resources representatives also actively recruit by attending career fairs and interview sessions across the United States.

### **REDUCTION IN FORCE (RIF)**

The Board will make every effort to avoid exercising Reduction-in-Force (RIF) procedures through planned management techniques. However, the Board recognizes that a RIF may be necessary when overstaffing occurs due to the reasons specified in Board Policy GBKA: Professional Personnel Lay-Off.

### **RESIGNATIONS**

The Superintendent or Designee shall have authority to accept on behalf of the Board, an employee's resignation. If the Superintendent does not accept a resignation, it may be submitted directly to the Board for final disposition.

Non-contractual employees are requested to submit a letter of resignation as soon as possible, but at least two weeks prior to the expected date for leaving the District.

Contractual employees should provide a 30-day advance notice. Additionally, please contact the Division of Human Resources regarding contract release stipulations and requirements.

### **REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

Any school employee who has knowledge or reasonable cause to believe that a student has been a victim of physical abuse, sexual misconduct or other forms of harassment by another school employee, shall report such abuse or misconduct to the appropriate school administrator immediately. Please refer to your school administrator regarding protocols for reporting child abuse or neglect.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

All employees of the DeKalb County School District are entitled to a work environment free from sexual harassment and all other forms of discrimination.

Sexual harassment is a form of misconduct, which undermines the integrity of the employment relationship. No employee, male or female, shall be subject to unsolicited and unwelcomed sexual overtures or conduct of a verbal or physical nature. Please refer to Board Policy regarding Sexual Harassment complaint procedures.

## **SUBSTITUTE EMPLOYMENT**

Substitute employees are defined as those employed for a daily, half-day, or hourly period to replace an employee who is absent from duty. The hours per day and days per week are based on the needs of the District. Substitute employees are paid at an hourly, daily or unit rate of pay on a semi-monthly payroll schedule. All substitute employees are subject to Medicare tax.

## **SUBFINDER**

The SubFinder system automates teacher absence reporting and substitute teacher placement. Teachers, substitutes, and administrators may call SubFinder at 678-874-SUBS. All teacher absences must be entered into the SubFinder system. Failure to enter the absence will result in a payment delay for the substitute employee. Teachers and substitutes should use their Employee Identification Number (EID) for identification.

In addition to the telephone system, teachers, substitutes, and administrators may access SubFinder through WebConnect. Teachers and substitutes should use their last

name in the name field and Employee Identification Number (EID) in the password field for identification. For more information, please visit the SubFinder website at [subfinder.dekalb.k12.ga.us](http://subfinder.dekalb.k12.ga.us).

## **TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

The DeKalb County School District provides technologies, networks, and Internet access to support the educational mission of the District and to enhance the curriculum and learning opportunities for students and District employees. These technology resources may be used only in support of education and research and consistent with the educational objectives of the District.

All guidelines set forth in policy and any relevant regulations or rules are applicable to all telecommunication services and equipment provided by the District including, but not limited to, the following:

- Computer workstations and notebook computers;
- Smart phones, tablets, e-readers, and other mobile devices;
- Internet services;
- Telephone services; and
- Cellular telephone services.

Acceptable use agreements must be signed by all users of District technologies or networks.

District-provided access must be used in a responsible, efficient, ethical and legal manner. Failure to adhere to the District's policies and guidelines for the use of telecommunication resources may result in suspending or revoking the right to access these resources.

It is also important to remember that all electronic communications are subject to public records laws. Unacceptable uses of the network include: violating the conditions of the Educators Code of Ethics dealing with students' rights to privacy, using profanity, obscenity, or other offensive language, reposting personal communications without the author's prior consent, copying commercial software in violation of copyright law, copying other copyright protected material and using the network for financial gain or for any commercial or illegal activity.

## **TRANSFERS**

Employees are eligible to apply for a transfer to another work location after completing two (2) years of service at their current work location. Current satisfactory evaluations are required.

### TRANSFER PROCEDURES AND TIMELINES

1. Eligible employees must submit a completed Transfer Request Form to their current Principal/Director for verification of eligibility.
2. If the employee is eligible for a transfer, the Principal/Director must sign the Transfer Request Form to verify eligibility.
3. Employees must submit a signed copy of their Transfer Request Form to all schools/centers where they wish to be considered for a transfer. Principals and/or Directors must send the Transfer Request Form to Human Resources no later than stated deadline on the form.

4. Employees who are eligible for a transfer may be considered for a lateral vacancy by the stated deadline on the form.
5. Principals/Directors should interview lateral transfer candidates and make a recommendation to Human Resources.
6. Principals/Directors who wish to fill a vacancy with a transfer applicant must notify Human Resources by completing Section III of the Transfer Request Form and submitting the signed form to the appropriate Human Resources Staffing Manager. All recommendations will be reviewed, and if approved, the Staffing Manager will notify the employee, the current principal, and the receiving principal of the new assignment.

***NOTE: Final decisions for staffing will be based on the availability of earned allotments.***

## **TUTORING**

Except as provided for in District-sponsored programs: (1) no employee shall provide tutoring on District property for which compensation that is in addition to the employee's District salary is received; and (2) no employee shall tutor, for compensation, either during the school year or summer, any student who is currently assigned to the employee.

## **WORK CALENDAR**

The DeKalb County Board of Education shall adopt a calendar for each school year. The Superintendent is authorized to develop a calendar, which will satisfy the legal requirements and the policies of the State Board of Education and the accrediting

agencies. Plans should be made to avoid conflict with the work calendar whenever possible.

## **WORK HOURS**

The supervisor of each school/department has the authority to set work hours. Work hours are subject to change to meet the

needs of the school District. Personal activities should be arranged by each staff member to assure them of being available for work during their scheduled hours of duty. Changes in work schedules will be arranged as far in advance as possible.

# BENEFITS

A comprehensive benefits package is offered to full-time employees. Coverage will be effective on the first of the month following thirty (30) days of service and an insurance premium will be deducted the month prior to the effective date of coverage.

If an employee is transferring to the District from another Georgia public school system or educational facility, the employee shall advise Insurance Services when enrolling so that medical premiums may be coordinated appropriately. Once the initial selection of benefits is made, changes may only be made during Open Enrollment or for a qualifying event as defined in Section 125 of the IRS code.

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## *Benefits Options Available for Employees:*

### **STATE HEALTH BENEFIT PLANS**

The District offers an array of health plans that include major medical and pharmacy benefits. Options include:

- Health Maintenance Organization (HMO)
- Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) Health Plans
- High Deductible Health Plans (HDHP)

### **STATE PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION - FLEXIBLE BENEFIT PLANS**

The District offers the following optional benefit plans:

- Dental
- Vision
- Legal Insurance
- Employee Optional Group Term Life and AD&D Insurance
- Spouse and Children Term Life Insurance
- Dependent Care Spending Accounts
- Health Care Spending Accounts
- Short-Term Disability - Replaces up to 60% of salary
- Long-Term Care Insurance
- Specified Illness Insurance

*\*\*\*\*All health and flexible benefits provided are at a rate significantly reduced from that available if the individual were not an employee of the District \*\*\*\**

### **OTHER AVAILABLE BENEFITS TO DISTRICT EMPLOYEES**

- Optional Tax Sheltered Annuity Investments
- Direct Deposit of Paychecks
- Credit Union Membership
- Sick Leave Bank

### **AETNA LIFE INSURANCE POLICY**

The Board of Education provides a \$10,000 term life insurance and a \$1,000 accidental-death-and-dismemberment insurance for all benefit-eligible employees.

### **BOARD TAX SHELTERED ANNUITY**

The Board of Education does not contribute to Social Security. The Board TSA plan provides employees with saving for retirement with pre-tax contributions that grow tax-deferred. Currently, contributions



are suspended for employees covered under TRS. For employees covered under the Public Schools Employees' Retirement System (PSERS), the Board contributes 8% of PSERS-eligible gross salary to the employee's Board TSA through Fidelity Investments.

## **COBRA**

If an employee or dependents become ineligible for coverage under the District's medical, dental, or vision program, the employee may be eligible to extend coverage under the federal COBRA program. This allows the employee and/or dependents to continue receiving insurance coverage by self-paid premiums.

## **CREDIT UNION**

All employees of the District are provided access to the services of the Georgia United Credit Union.

## **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides confidential counseling to help employees with any issues that can cause distress and interfere with their ability to do their job well. Full-time employees and their families can call 1-877-327-5832 or visit [www.AetnaEAP.com](http://www.AetnaEAP.com) then enter **EAP4LIFE** as the login ID.

## **HOLIDAYS**

The District recognizes the following holidays:

- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Holiday
- Winter Holiday/Break
- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday

- Presidents' Day
- Spring Holiday/Break
- Memorial Day

## **LONG-TERM DISABILITY**

All District employees are covered by long-term disability insurance. Long-term disability will provide the employee with up to 60% of their annual salary. Benefits premiums must be paid directly to the State Health Benefit Plan and Georgia Breeze. Benefits will begin after the employee has been disabled for 180 calendar days.

Questions regarding short-term disability and long-term disability insurance should be addressed to The Standard Insurance Company. This company administers the plan for District employees and will discuss all issues regarding disability insurance. The Standard Insurance Company can be reached at 1-888-641-7186.

## **MEDICARE**

All employees who were initially employed or reemployed after March 31, 1986, are required by federal law to pay Medicare tax. The Medicare employer contributions must be charged against the Alternative Plan to Social Security.

## **PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM**

All employees who are eligible to participate in the Public School Employees Retirement System of Georgia are required, under the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 47-4-40, to become members when employed by the Board.

Bus drivers, food service employees, some non-supervisory maintenance and custodial personnel, and other employees not eligible

for membership in TRS are eligible for membership in PSERS. For additional information on PSERS, please contact the Public School Retirement System of Georgia (PSERS) (404) 350-6300 or [www.ers.ga.gov](http://www.ers.ga.gov).

### **SHORT-TERM DISABILITY**

Short-term disability insurance provides compensation during a leave of absence. When choosing to use short-term disability insurance instead of sick leave, it is important to note that using sick leave will provide the employee with 100% of pay, contributions to TRS, and premiums to cover benefits. Short-term disability will provide the employee with 60% of pay, no contributions to TRS, and benefits premiums must be paid directly to the State Health Benefit Plan and Georgia Breeze/Hewitt. Benefits deductions are not taken out of Short-term disability payments.

A portion of the application for short-term disability must be completed by the employer (school or department). Employees should see the Facility Insurance Coordinator for assistance with the form and instructions on forwarding the form directly to The Standard Insurance Company. Employees who hold short-term disability insurance may use the coverage while on Family Medical Leave.

### **SICK LEAVE BANK**

The Sick Leave Bank (SLB) was established to provide additional sick leave to SLB members that have catastrophic or debilitating personal health conditions or disabilities.

Employees may enroll in the SLB during open enrollment. If a SLB member experiences a condition that is medically

debilitating or catastrophic to the employee and exhausts all personal sick leave days, they may request days from the SLB. The application for leave may be retrieved from the [DCSD Website](#) or in the Department of Staff Services in Human Resources.

SLB is for the employee only and may not be used for family members. Applicants may request up to 45 days per calendar year. If the applicant misses a paycheck or is docked and receives SLB benefits afterwards, they will be retroactively reimbursed for the time and funds.

Employees receiving funds from Worker's Compensation or Short Term Disability are not eligible for SLB benefits. For specific information, please review the SLB guidelines. Contact the Division of Human Resources for a copy of the guidelines.

### **SOCIAL SECURITY**

Eligible part-time and substitute employees may participate in the Social Security Program and, when required under the provisions of federal law, may pay contributions to FICA when employed by the Board.

### **TEACHERS RETIREMENT SYSTEM**

All employees, pursuant to applicable statute, who are eligible to participate in the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia (TRS), are required, under the provisions of the law, to become members of TRS when employed by the DeKalb County Board of Education. The state and the Board shall contribute their portions of the funds as required by law, and the employee's portion shall be deducted from the employee's salary as required by law. All covered compensation paid by the Board to eligible,

full-time employees shall be reported to TRS.

Eligible members of TRS are required to contribute 6% of their salary. The District contributes 11.41% of the employee's salary. For additional information, please visit [www.trsga.com](http://www.trsga.com). The following positions are covered under TRS: teachers, administrators, supervisors, teacher aides, secretaries, paraprofessionals, public school nurses, employees of the Agricultural Extension Service. For additional information on TRS, please contact the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia (TRS) (404) 352-6500 or [www.trsga.com](http://www.trsga.com).

## **WORKERS' COMPENSATION**

Employees may be entitled to workers' compensation benefits if injured on the job. The injury must arise out of and in the course of employment. The injured employee must provide notice, either in person or in writing, of the injury immediately, but not later than 30 days after the accident, to the employee's immediate supervisor. Failure to do so may result in the

loss of benefits. The injured employee may select a medical care provider from the panel of approved physicians. Only those providers listed are authorized to provide medical care for a work-related injury.

Generally, employees are not eligible for workers' compensation benefits for injuries sustained going to or coming from work, during deviations from the scope of employment (e.g., a person making a delivery drives to a place unconnected to the employee assignment), as a consequence of imported danger (e.g., an employee's own attire or a personal weapon causes injury to the employee, when an employee engages in a prohibited act, when the employee engages in horseplay, during recreational or social activities, or during times in which the employee is not subject to the employer's control (e.g., not on the premises, not during the regularly scheduled work day). Any questions should be addressed to your immediate supervisor or a Legal Affairs Representative.

# CERTIFICATION

The Certification Unit ensures that all educators in the District adhere to the certification rules and guidelines set forth by the State of Georgia and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC).

It is the responsibility of all professionally certified employees to obtain and maintain Georgia certification. Certification forms and information are available on the PSC's website at <http://www.gapsc.com>.

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## **ADDING A FIELD TO AN EXISTING CERTIFICATE**

To add a field to an established professional certificate at the bachelor's degree level or higher, an applicant must either: (1) pass the appropriate content assessment(s) in the new field; or (2) complete a state-approved program in the new field and be recommended by the program for certification in the appropriate field.

Teachers must complete the certification application and submit documentation to the Certification Unit. Once all documents have been received, the packet will be submitted by the Certification Unit via the ExpressLane portal to the PSC.

## **ALTERNATIVE TEACHER CERTIFICATION**

### ***Teacher Academy for Preparation and Pedagogy (TAPP)***

The TAPP Program is designed to provide an untraditional, non-degree, preparation route to teacher certification. The required coursework will be completed through a blend of online and face-to-face coursework. The teacher candidate has up to three (3) years to complete the program. Certification requirements and information are available

on the District's website at <http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us>.

## **CERTIFICATE CATEGORIES**

Certificates are grouped under two major categories: Renewable and Non-renewable.

Renewable certificates are valid for five (5) years, during which time the educator must satisfy standard renewal requirements. Non-renewable certificates are valid for three (3) years. During the three (3) year validity period, the educator must satisfy specified requirements to convert the non-renewable certificate to a clear renewable certificate.

## **CERTIFICATE LEVELS**

The level assigned to a certificate indicates the highest degree level recognized by the PSC that has been awarded to the certificate holder. College hours beyond a degree are not used to assign the level. Only the highest degree awarded on an official transcript from a PSC accepted accredited institution is used to determine the single level that is assigned to all certificate fields held by that educator. The assignment of a certification level to various degrees is contingent on a valid certificate field being held and the degree being awarded on an official transcript from a PSC-accepted accredited institution.

## **CERTIFICATE UPGRADES**

Requests for upgrades of clear renewable certificates, based on receipt of a master's, specialist's, or doctoral degree, must be made in writing by submitting the certification application and a **SEALED** copy of the official transcript showing the degree completion date to the Certification Unit. Once the completed packet has been received, the Certification Unit will forward the documentation to the PSC.

**NOTE:** For compensation purposes, the effective date a certificate upgrade is based on the date recorded on the certificate received in the current fiscal year of the upgrade.

## **HIGHLY QUALIFIED PROVISIONS**

Certificated staff must hold a valid Georgia certificate in the field to which they are assigned. Any teacher who does not teach in the field for which he/she was properly certified 100 percent of the day will not be considered "highly qualified." Failure to maintain the status of "highly qualified" may result in termination or non-renewal of an employee's contract.

## **ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT (ESEA)**

### PARENTS RIGHT TO KNOW

Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, school districts that receive Federal Title I funding must notify parents of their right to know the professional qualifications of the teachers and paraprofessionals who instruct their child.

## NON-HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHER LETTERS

An additional provision of the ESEA requires that the District notify parents if their child is assigned to a teacher for four or more consecutive weeks who is not "highly qualified." A Non-Highly Qualified letter must be sent for teachers in core area fields only. Core area fields include Reading, Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Science, Fine Arts, and Foreign Languages.

## **RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CLEAR RENEWABLE CERTIFICATES**

Educators should not allow their educator's certificates to expire. Failure to maintain a valid certificate at all times may be considered grounds for termination or non-renewal of an employee's contract. Requirements for renewal include

1. A criminal record check must be done through the Department of Public Safety during the school year in which the certificate expires; and
2. A completed teacher certification application.

Once all requirements have been satisfied, the applicant documents (application and the Criminal Background Check form) should be submitted to the Certification Unit.

## **SUBJECT AREA CONTENT ASSESSMENT**

Georgia Assessments for the Certification of Educators (GACE) test are fully aligned with national standards, Georgia educator certification requirements, Georgia educator preparation standards, and the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). Two GACE

assessments types are required for all professional certificates in the State of Georgia (Basic Skills Assessment and Content Assessments).

# COMPENSATION AND CLASSIFICATION

The Compensation and Classification Unit in the Division of Human Resources is responsible for determining salary placement for all District employees, review and process, experience verification forms, issues contracts, processes sick leave transfers, issue and maintain salary supplements for extracurricular activities. Additionally the Unit is responsible the implementing salary changes due to certification upgrades, promotions, maintaining position specifications for all positions, conducting salary history research, and determining the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) status for positions.

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## **BREAK PERIODS**

The Federal FLSA guidelines do not require breaks be given to employees. All non-exempt employees will be paid for hours worked. The District permits the reasonable use of rest periods of short duration (for example, five to ten minutes) to help an employee work more efficiently. Any time taken as a break during work hours is paid time.

Supervisors are asked to practice flexibility and empathy when personal needs for short breaks arise. This will require thorough administrative oversight, and if the use of break periods is abused by staff, administration has the right to refuse break time or to make any appropriate modifications or limitations necessary.

## **CONTRACTS**

### NEW HIRE

At the time of hire, a certified employee will be issued a standard, annual contract, which is valid for the current school year.

### ANNUAL

In May of each school year, the Board will issue new contracts for the upcoming school year to all eligible, professional personnel recommended for contract renewal.

Employees who have resigned, been terminated, or have not been recommended for contract renewal will be notified in writing.

### CONTRACT RELEASE PROCEDURES

The Board considers a signed contract to be a legally binding document; therefore, an employee's request to be released from a contract will only be granted for one of the following reasons:

- Documented personal health problems that require the contracted employee's full-time care and attention;
- Family situation change that requires a one-way commuting distance in excess of 50 miles of the contracted position. Supporting documentation must be provided in writing and must include a change of address that occurred after the current employment contract was signed;
- A documented spousal transfer and relocation that requires a one-way commuting distance in excess of 50 miles of the contracted position;
- A documented promotion within the field of education or the acceptance of a position with a college or university, an

educational consulting company, or an educational opportunity overseas.

*Each request will be reviewed, on a case-by-case basis.*

## **COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENTS AND STEP INCREASES**

Salary increases will be awarded for Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) when approved by the Board.

For certificated employees who receive satisfactory annual evaluations, step increases are given when approved by the Board. A step increase may be denied to a certificated employee if he/she receives an unsatisfactory annual evaluation in a given school year.

## **DUTY-FREE LUNCH FOR NON-EXEMPT EMPLOYEES IN A CENTRAL OFFICE SETTING**

Non-exempt employees **in a central office setting** are to work a 9-hour day with a 1 hour unpaid and uninterrupted lunch period. This will equate to physically working 8 hours per day. If they are needed to stay after work for meetings, training, or additional work, the work schedule must be adjusted to accommodate a 40-hour workweek. They should leave immediately after the work schedule time is completed.

## **DUTY-FREE LUNCH FOR NON-EXEMPT EMPLOYEES IN A SCHOOL SETTING**

Non-exempt employees in a school setting are to work an 8.5-hour day with a 30 minute unpaid and uninterrupted lunch period. This will equate to physically working 8 hours per day. If such employees are needed to stay after school

for meetings, training, or to perform additional work, the work schedule must be adjusted to accommodate a 40-hour workweek. They should leave immediately after the work schedule time is completed.

*Non-exempt employees should have a 30-minute period of uninterrupted time, which is referred to as "lunch" even if he/she decides not to eat at that time. The employee should sign in and out for this lunch. While the non-exempt employee is on the 30-minute period of uninterrupted time, he/she is not to be asked to perform any work-related duties. If a non-exempt employee is assigned "cafeteria duty" and is required to monitor students at that time, he/she should not be eating lunch with the students if he/she plans to take the 30 minutes of uninterrupted time later during the day or had taken it before the "cafeteria duty."*

## **DUTY-FREE LUNCH FOR TEACHERS (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-218)**

Every teacher who is employed in grades Kindergarten through five (K - 5) for a period of time of more than one-half of the class periods of the regular school day shall be provided a daily lunch period of not less than 30 consecutive minutes, and such employee shall not be assigned any responsibilities during this lunch period.

## **EXPERIENCE VERIFICATION FOR SALARY PLACEMENT**

Experience used to determine salary placement must be related to the position in which the employee is assigned and must be verified using the appropriate experience verification form. For experience to be considered for the current year's salary, the experience verification form must be



received in Human Resources no later than June 30 of that work year.

## **FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT**

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) is a federal labor law governing overtime, minimum wage, child labor, and equal pay. It requires employers to keep records of all hours worked by non-exempt employees.

## **MILITARY EXPERIENCE AND SALARY PLACEMENT**

Military experience will be granted for each year of service, up to a maximum of three years. The official DD-214 document is required.

## **NON-EXEMPT OR EXEMPT**

Under the FLSA, District employees are classified as “non-exempt” or “exempt.” Non-exempt employees are entitled to overtime pay; exempt employees are not. For non-exempt employees, the FLSA requires overtime pay (at time and one-half) for all hours worked over 40 in a workweek.

## **OVERTIME PROTOCOL AND APPROVAL PROCESS**

No District employee shall work overtime unless the time has been pre-approved by the Superintendent or Deputy or Chief Administrator. Any employee who works overtime without such pre-approval may receive consequences up to and including a recommendation for termination.

## **PAY CHECKS**

Employees are paid semi-monthly. Paychecks are distributed to employees

through direct deposit or a Chase PAYTM Payroll Card. Payroll statements or stubs are available online through Web Pay. To access WebPay visit the following link <https://webpay.dekalb.k12.ga.us/>.

## **PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS**

Each employee’s paycheck will have specific deductions as required by law, District regulation(s), and/or at the employee’s request. Examples of required deductions include, but are not limited to, federal and state income taxes and retirement contributions (e.g., Teachers Retirement System (TRS) or Public School Employees Retirement System (PSERS)). Examples of optional deductions include, but are not limited to, credit union savings or loan payments, insurance premiums, and charitable contributions.

## **POSITION SPECIFICATIONS**

Specifications for all positions are maintained in the Division of Human Resources by the Compensation and Classification Unit. A position specification shall be developed for each new position prior to staffing the position. An updated position specification is required for a position if there is a significant change in the duties and responsibilities assigned to the position. The specification for each position vacated shall be reviewed and updated by the immediate supervisor before the position is re-staffed.

## **RETIREES RETURNING TO WORK**

A retiree from the District or another Georgia school system will be employed in accordance with TRS and Board guidelines and procedures.

## **SALARY INCREASE FOR ADVANCED DEGREE**

Employee may receive a salary increase, if placed on a salary schedule, which recognizes a salary increase for an advanced degree. Due to changes instituted by the Professional Standard Commission (PSC) regarding degree upgrades and the District's compensation structure, employees should contact the Certification or Compensation and Classification Unit **prior** to enrolling into a program to inquire about a salary increase for an advanced degree. This is the employee's responsibility.

## **SALARY PLACEMENT FOR CERTIFIED EMPLOYEES**

Salaries for certificated employees are determined by the Georgia teaching certificate that they hold and the years of experience that have been verified. Salary placement for a certified employee will be administered in accordance with Georgia Code: GBA (5)160-5-2-05, "Experience for Salary Purposes."

## **SALARY PLACEMENT FOR CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES**

For classified employees, salary placement is determined based on the appropriate verification of experience.

Classified employees will not receive additional salary compensation for education that is beyond what is required for the position.

## **SALARY SCHEDULE**

The annual compensation for employees will be based on the salary schedule adopted by the Board. Upon request, salary schedules are available for review through the Compensation & Classification Unit.

## **SALARY SUPPLEMENTS**

Salary supplements are given to employees who are hired to perform extracurricular duties. Salary supplements are recommended by the school administrator to the Department of Employment Services.

## **SIGN-IN/SIGN-OUT SHEET**

*Non-exempt employees* are required to sign in at the start of their workday, sign out for lunch, sign in after lunch, and sign out at the end of the day.

*School based exempt employees* should sign in at the beginning of the day and out at the end of the day. Exempt employees are **not** required to sign in and out for lunch; however, each school or department may establish its own accountability protocol for presence at the worksite and other routine visits.

## **VERIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

The District's verification procedures are intended to protect the privacy of current and former employees. All requests for employment verification and experience verifications should be forwarded to the Division of Human Resources or faxed to 678-676-0187, which is a secured fax line.

The Verification Unit can verbally verify employment, dates of employment, and position titles over the telephone. To make a verbal request for employment verification, the requesting party must have the employee's name and social security number. Inquiries regarding salary and experience must be submitted in letterform with the identified employee's authorized signature.

## **VOLUNTEER WORK PROHIBITION**

The District is prohibited from asking a non-exempt employee, under any circumstances, to “volunteer” to perform services. Non-exempt employees, in turn, are prohibited from performing any volunteer work that is the *same type* of work for which the employee is usually paid.

Under the FLSA, an overtime-eligible employee cannot volunteer or be asked to volunteer to do extra work if payment would otherwise be required in order to get the work accomplished. The FLSA states that an employee may volunteer and

not receive compensation if and only if the employee (1) performs hours of service for a public agency for civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons, without expectation of compensation; (2) offers services freely and without pressure or coercion; and (3) is not otherwise employed by the same school district to perform the same type of services as those for which the individual proposes to volunteer. Therefore, for example, principals cannot ask a non-exempt employee to “volunteer” a day and to perform duties for which they would usually be compensated.

## LEAVES AND ATTENDANCE

To ensure the stability of a competent work force and job security for employees, the Board provides leave of absence benefits to eligible employees. Please refer to Board Policy GBRI: Professional Personnel Personal Leaves and Absences, for a complete listing of all employee leave provisions.

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### ATTENDANCE

All employees are expected to be at work on time, every day. Late or absent employees must call the principal/school designee or the department supervisor as soon as possible *in advance* of time to report. When calling, the employee must speak to the supervisor or designee. Leaving a voice mail is not permitted. Following this process will allow the employee the option of choosing time from vacation or sick/personal leave to ensure payment for the time absent; however, if the employee does not call and speak to the supervisor or designee, their pay will be docked for time missed.

Failure to call in when absent for any reason other than approved vacation or personal leave will be considered an unauthorized absence. Only in an emergency shall someone other than the employee call the principal/school designee to report an absence.

### BEREAVEMENT/RELIGIOUS LEAVE

An employee may use up to a maximum of three (3) days of accumulated sick leave and/or up to three (3) days of personal leave as religious or bereavement leave in the event of the death of a relative. Relative is defined as the following: spouse, child, sibling, parent, grandparent, grandchild, and corresponding step and in-law relations. If the employee desires to take leave in excess

of the days provided under this policy, the employee may take unpaid leave.

### EXTENDED MEDICAL LEAVE

Employees who have exhausted the leave provisions under the FMLA may apply for an extended medical leave. The extended medical leave may not exceed a period of one year. After one year, if the employee does not return to the District, the employee will be separated from the District.

### FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

The District fully complies with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) as adopted by the U. S. Congress on February 5, 1993. Employees who have been employed by the District for at least 12 months and have worked at least 1,250 hours for the District in the previous 12-month period, are eligible to take 12 weeks of unpaid leave for the following: (a) because of the birth of a son or daughter of the employee and in order to care for such son or daughter; (b) because of the placement of a son or daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care; (c) in order to care for the spouse, or a son, daughter, or parent, of the employee, if such spouse, son, daughter, or parent has a serious health condition; (d) because of a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of the position of such employee; or (e) because of any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the spouse, or a son, daughter, or parent of the employee is on

covered active duty (or has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty) in the Armed Forces. All leave shall be taken in accordance with the FMLA.

### **JOB PROTECTION UPON RETURN FROM LEAVE**

The Human Resources Division will make every effort to find a position for reemployment for eligible employees returning from leave of absence. Employees returning from FMLA leave will be returned to the same or equivalent position and location, as defined under the FMLA.

Employees returning from an approved Extended Leave of Absence may be considered for reinstatement in accordance with the Administrative Regulation associated with Board Policy GBRI.

### **JURY AND WITNESS LEAVE**

Employees subpoenaed either for jury duty or as a witness to testify before a court of law in a case arising out of the employee's duties as a District employee shall be allowed a leave of absence without loss of pay. An employee, who serves as a juror or a witness, as described herein, shall not have the leave deducted from sick, personal, or professional leave. No employee utilizing witness leave shall be required to pay the cost of employing a substitute employee to serve during the employee's absence on such witness leave.

### **LEAVE OF ABSENCE WITHOUT PAY**

All requests for a leave of absence without pay must be approved. Any employee who takes a leave of absence, for any reason, without approval from the Division of Human Resources will be placed on leave without pay. The Division of Human

Resources will notify the employee of the unapproved leave, with a request to return to work. If the employee fails to respond to the notification and/or to return to work, the employee may be recommended to the Superintendent for termination from the District for abandonment of his/her assigned position.

### **MILITARY LEAVE**

Full-time employees of the District shall be entitled to paid military leave not to exceed eighteen days in any federal fiscal year for the purpose of complying with ordered military duty with the Armed Forces of the United States or the State of Georgia, including duty as a voluntary member of the militia or the reserve component. Employees are also entitled to paid leave not exceeding thirty days in any one federal fiscal year if ordered to duty as a result of the declaration of any emergency by the governor or the appropriate officials of the United States Armed Forces.

Full-time employees of the District shall be entitled to military leave for long-term, ordered military duty, with full employment and reinstatement rights as provided by law. The employee subject to such military duty must provide the Division of Human Resources with a copy of the official military orders, along with the request for such leave.

### **PERSONAL LEAVE**

During a school year, employees may utilize up to a maximum of three (3) days of any accumulated sick leave, if prior approval of the absence has been given by the employee's immediate supervisor and if the presence of the employee requesting the absence is not essential for effective school operation. Employee attendance on certain

days, designated critical days, is crucial for effective school operation.

Personal/vacation leave may not be authorized during the following designated critical days for any personnel: pre-planning, post planning, the first five (5) days of the school year, or the last five (5) days of the school year. Any exceptions must be approved by the Superintendent or designee.

Further, personal/vacation leave may not be authorized for school-based employees during either the first two (2) days prior to a school holiday period or a work calendar reduction day, or the two (2) days following a school holiday period or a work calendar reduction day. Nor may personal/vacation leave be authorized for school-based employees during any federal or state standardized assessments administered by the District.

All requests for personal leave must be submitted in writing to the employee's principal or supervisor at least three (3) days prior to the requested leave date. Any days missed for personal reasons in excess of three (3) days are unauthorized absences and will result in loss of pay charged at the employee's daily rate of pay. An employee is not required to indicate specific reasons for personal leave. The employee's principal or supervisor has the right to approve or deny the employee's request for personal leave.

### **PROFESSIONAL LEAVE (SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE)**

Annually, each school will be allotted professional leave days, which will not be charged against an employee's personal leave allotment when used as specified by this policy. Each school will be allotted one day for each seven, full-time, certificated

employees. An employee desiring to use one or more of these days to attend a professional meeting should submit a written request to the principal at least three weeks prior to the meeting date. Principals are responsible for developing and maintaining an equitable system for distributing allotted professional leave days among teachers of different departments and grades.

### **PROFESSIONAL LEAVE (GRADUATE STUDY WITHOUT PAY)**

Full-time personnel who have been employed with the District for at least twelve (12) months and wish to pursue graduate degrees in education that are related to the employee's position with the District, may request an unpaid leave of absence to complete a residence degree program, student teaching assignment, or other internship as required by the attending university.

The employee must submit an application for professional leave at least six weeks prior to the leave event. Once an employee is granted professional leave, the employee may take up to one (1) year of unpaid leave to complete the course requirements. Only one professional leave may be granted for each employee within a two-year cycle. Any employee wishing to complete non-degree programs are not eligible for professional leave. The Division of Human Resources has the right to deny the request for professional leave. Reasonable efforts will be made to reassign an employee who returns from professional leave within the allotted time, but not necessarily to the same position previously held.

## **SICK LEAVE**

Ten-month employees earn 12.5 sick-leave days per year. Twelve-month employees earn 15 sick-leave days per year. An employee may utilize sick leave upon the approval of the Superintendent or her designee for absence(s) due to illness or injury or necessitated by exposure to contagious disease or to illness or the death of the employee's relative, defined as the following: spouse, child, sibling, parent, grandparent, grandchild, and corresponding step and in-law relations.

## **VACATION LEAVE**

Full-time, 12-month employees who have completed a minimum of ninety (90) days of service in the District will earn ten (10) days of vacation per year during the first five (5) years of continuous employment. During

each additional one-year period of continuous service, the employee earns one more day of vacation than that earned the preceding year, not to exceed twenty (20) days of vacation per year. Unused vacation days may be accumulated, up to a maximum of thirty (30) days in addition to vacation earned during the current year of service, but no more than one-half of the earned but unused vacation of the previous year may be accumulated.

All requests for vacation leave must be submitted, in writing, to the employee's principal or supervisor at least two weeks prior to the requested leave date. The employee's principal or supervisor has the right to approve or deny the employee's request for vacation leave.

## **PERSONNEL RECORDS**

The Records Center is responsible for maintaining permanent personnel files and records for all District employees. Records assist with filing, scanning, and verifying all employment documents. When an employee has accepted an offer of employment within the District, files are established to maintain a history of employment.

These records are retained in the Division of Human Resources. Personnel records dating back from the establishment of the District in 1946 through February 2001 are currently in hard-copy paper file. Since March 1, 2001, all personnel who secured, or have attempted to secure, a position within the District have an electronic file stored through the Paperless Applicant Tracking System.

There is only one official personnel file for each employee. Each employee's file is maintained in a secured area in the Division of Human Resources. Confidentiality of all files is maintained and anonymous material is not placed in the official personnel file of employees. Information or records in an employee's personnel file may be subject to disclosure to the public under the Open Records Act.

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### **ACCESS TO PERSONNEL FILE**

An employee shall have access to her personnel file during normal operating hours of the Division of Human Resources three times during a calendar year. To assure access, employees should coordinate with the Division of Human Resources. An employee who wants to review their personnel file may make a written request to the Division of Human Resources or call 678-676-0094.

The Division of Human Resources will schedule an appointment for the employee to access the records within five days of the request. Under no circumstances shall the official personnel file be removed from the office by the employee, and access to the file will only be given in the presence of a Human Resources Manager. Valid identification must be presented by the employee. The employee will have the right to rebut or to present matters of extenuating

circumstances, but the employee shall not have the right to remove any material from the file.

### **FINANCIAL DATA/LEGAL PROCESSING**

Child support, tax levies, and bankruptcy and garnishment transactions are processed according to applicable state and federal laws.

### **NAME AND ADDRESS CHANGES**

Each employee of the District has the responsibility to notify the Department of Staff Services of changes to their current mailing address and/or telephone number. In order to change a name on personnel records, it is necessary for the employee to request and complete a name-change packet. Additionally, all certificated employees who choose to change their name on their educator's certificate must complete and



submit a name change application to the Certification Unit.

## **REPORTING CHANGES IN THE PERSONNEL FILE**

Keeping the personnel file up-to-date is important with regard to pay, deductions, benefits, and other matters. It is the responsibility of employee to inform Human Resources when there are changes in:

- Legal name
- Home address
- Home telephone number
- Marital status
- Driving record or status of driver's license
- Military or draft status
- Federal or state tax withholding updates
- Required training certificates
- Required professional license(s).

It is important to be aware of the person named as beneficiary of the employee's life insurance and retirement plans and to notify the Employee Benefits Unit should a change in beneficiary be desired. The District will not be responsible for non-receipt of any official communication sent to an employee if the employee has failed to file a change of address notice with the Division of Human Resources. Should an employee need to change the number of dependents or allowances listed for income tax purposes, it will be necessary for the employee to secure, complete, and return Forms W-4 or G-4 to the Employee Benefits Section.

## **REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FROM THE PERSONNEL FILE**

Personnel files are the property of the District and access to information is restricted. Information contained in an employee's personnel file is not made available to others except as may be required by law, when requested by the employee, or when requested by school officials with a need to know in an official capacity. Otherwise, requests for information not specifically approved by the employee will be referred to the Office of Legal Affairs. Georgia's Open Records Act lists certain records that are protected from public disclosure. Among those listed are medical records, home address information, Social Security Numbers, and confidential evaluations. The District will release, with written approval from the employee, information about the employee's current salary, dates of employment, job title, and work location.

The employee may make a request for the reproduction of documents from personnel files, by submitting a **Personnel Records Request Form**. A copy of the form may be found in First Class/DeKalb Discussions /DCSD Staff Services/Personnel Records Request Form.