



**Guilford**  
**County Schools**

**Personnel Handbook**  
**2015-2016**

712 N. Eugene Street  
Greensboro, NC 27401  
[www.gcsnc.com](http://www.gcsnc.com)

## Nondiscrimination Policy

In compliance with federal laws, Guilford County Schools administers all educational programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination because of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, color, age, military service, disability, marital status, parental status or gender, except where exemption is appropriate and allowed by law. Refer to the Board of Education's Discrimination Free Environment Policy AC for a complete statement.

Inquiries or complaints regarding Title IX should be directed to:

Guilford County Schools Compliance Officer  
120 Franklin Boulevard  
Greensboro, NC 27401

Phone: 336-370-8154

Inquiries or complaints regarding Section 504 should be directed to:

Director of Exceptional Children  
120 Franklin Boulevard  
Greensboro, NC 27401

Phone: 336-370-8103

### **Tobacco-Free Facilities**

All Guilford County Schools facilities, both educational and athletic, are tobacco-free learning environments.

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***General Information***

## Introduction

The Guilford County Schools Employee Handbook helps address the resource needs of Guilford County Schools' employees for up-to-date information on issues that affect their employment with the school district. References to Guilford County Board of Education policies and procedures are included throughout the Personnel Handbook, but are not intended to cover those policies and procedures in detail.

All employees of the Guilford County Board of Education have a duty to understand and comply with applicable laws, policies and procedures. Copies of our policies and procedures are available at each school, other work sites and on the school district's Web site. These resources may be easily accessed for the detailed information that is often needed by employees.

Please note that each school may assist its employees by way of site-based guidelines not contained in this handbook or official Board documents. Additionally, district-wide divisions and departments (e.g. Payroll) other than Human Resources may have published procedures that affect employees.

Guilford County Schools' policies and procedures, whether or not contained in this handbook, are not an employment contract nor are they terms of an employment contract. The school district's employees (other than employees in positions covered by North Carolina General Statute 115C-325, or employees who have specific employment contracts) are employees at will. This means the employee or the school district has the right to terminate the relationship at any time, with or without reason. Nothing in this handbook is intended to create an employment contract.

Guilford County Schools confirms the receipt of, and acknowledgement of access to the Employee Handbook by each employee on the Guilford County Schools Web site and the associated duty to become familiar with district policies and procedures. Revisions to the handbook are made as necessary. We believe the information contained in this handbook to be accurate at the time of publication. All employees should be alert to changes in policies and/or procedures implemented during the year. Proposed policies are available for public comment before adoption. Changed policies and/or procedures are placed on the Web site when adopted/approved. Because we always seek to improve the usefulness of this handbook, employees are encouraged to send written suggestions or ideas regarding its content to [feedback@gcsnc.com](mailto:feedback@gcsnc.com).

Please accept our best wishes for a great year and we appreciate your dedication to the students of Guilford County Schools.

Shirley Morrison Ed.D.  
Chief Human Resources Officer

# Mission Statement

## **Vision**

Achieving educational excellence – the successful coupling of academic education and character development.

## **Mission**

Guilford County students will graduate as responsible citizens prepared to succeed in higher education, or in the career of their choice.

## **Core Values**

**Diversity** | We are committed to creating an education organization where a variety of persons and perspectives are welcome. We are committed to providing an environment where students and staff from all cultures and backgrounds may succeed.

**Empathy** | We are committed to developing a culture where our employees identify with and understand the feelings of our students and parents as well as their colleagues.

**Equality** | We are committed to creating a school system where everyone is appreciated for who they are and evaluated based solely on their contributions and performance. Through the work of this institution, we will create awareness of – and develop strategies to understand and eradicate – prejudice, discrimination and racism on the individual and organizational levels.

**Innovativeness** | We are committed to fostering a work environment where the goal is not to manage innovations, but to become innovative. Problems are identified, ownership of those problems is assumed by the adults in the district, and everyone works together as agents of the solution until the problems are solved. We will not stop until obstacles are removed, solutions are found, and clear and compelling goals are established.

**Integrity** | We are committed to creating a school district that acts with honesty and forthrightness, holding ourselves to high academic and ethical standards, and treating everyone with respect.

## Team GCS | A Culture of Appreciation

Guilford County Schools depends on a team of employees with rich and diverse skills to achieve its educational mission. Each employee plays an important role in the goal of educational excellence and we strive to celebrate our accomplishments throughout the year.

GCS values the power of gratitude and appreciation and believes that a “thank you” a day can go a long way in sustaining a culture of gratitude. Valuing the rich and unique contributions we make as individuals and as a team enrich us as a district and contributes to creating healthier and more satisfying environment. Beginning with the district welcome during the onboarding process we strive to actively acknowledge the diversity of thought and contributions that make GCS a great place to work and learn.

## Guilford County Schools Code of Ethics

The success of our school system depends on adherence to the highest ethical principles in the operation of the system and in the relationship between the school board and superintendent, the superintendent and staff, staff among themselves and the staff and students. This code reflects the principles, goals and responsibilities that are essential to ensuring the integrity of the school system and these relationships. All persons who are employed by or associated with the Guilford County Schools shall seek to:

1. Assure the opportunity for high quality education for every student and make the well-being of students the fundamental principle for all decisions and actions.
2. Uphold the principles of due process and individual dignity; respect and protect the civil and human rights of everyone.
3. Consider all issues fairly.
4. Provide respectful and responsive service to colleagues, parents, students and community members.
5. Implement fully all national, state and local laws and regulations pertaining to education and public agencies.
6. Preserve, protect and promote the well-being of the Guilford County Schools.
7. Build and preserve trust in public education and work to instill respect for our community, state and nation.
8. Have the courage to act and to be responsible for one's own actions.
9. Maintain high standards and a strong work ethic.
10. Act as part of an educational team with mutual respect and regard for each other.
11. Create and foster an atmosphere where staff and students appreciate the richness of perspectives and cultures.

12. Act with honesty, fairness, integrity and discretion in all relationships, and model and teach the principles that compose the Character Development curricula for GCS, including courage, integrity, kindness, perseverance, respect, responsibility and self-discipline.
13. Adhere to the Conflict of Interest principles reflected in State law, State Board of Education and Guilford County Board policy.

# Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators

Adopted by the State Board of Education June 5, 1997

## **Preamble**

The purpose of this Code of Ethics is to define standards of professional conduct.

The responsibility to teach and the freedom to learn, and the guarantee of equal opportunity for all are essential to the achievement of these principles. The professional educator acknowledges the worth and dignity of every person and demonstrates the pursuit of truth and devotion to excellence, acquires knowledge, and nurtures democratic citizenship. The educator strives to maintain the respect and confidence of colleagues, students, parents and legal guardians, and the community, and to serve as an appropriate role model. The educator exemplifies a commitment to the teaching and learning processes with accountability to the students, maintains professional growth, exercises professional judgment, and personifies integrity.

To uphold these commitments, the educator:

### **I. Commitment to the Student**

- A. Protects students from conditions within the educator's control that circumvent learning or are detrimental to the health and safety of students.
- B. Maintains an appropriate relationship with students in all settings; does not encourage, solicit, or engage in a sexual or romantic relationship with students, nor touch a student in an inappropriate way for personal gratification, with intent to harm, or out of anger.
- C. Evaluates students and assigns grades based upon the students' demonstrated competencies and performance.
- D. Disciplines students justly and fairly and does not deliberately embarrass or humiliate them.
- E. Holds in confidence information learned in professional practice except for professional reasons or in compliance with pertinent regulations or statutes.
- F. Refuses to accept significant gifts, favors, or additional compensation that might influence or appear to influence professional decisions or actions.

### **II. Commitment to the School and the School System**

- A. Utilizes available resources to provide a classroom climate conducive to learning and to promote learning to the maximum possible extent.
- B. Acknowledges the diverse views of students, parents and legal guardians, and colleagues as they work collaboratively to shape educational goals, policies, and decisions; does not proselytize for personal viewpoints that are outside the scope of professional practice.
- C. Signs a contract in good faith and does not abandon contracted professional duties without a substantive reason.
- D. Participates actively in professional decision-making process and supports the expression of professional opinions and judgments by colleagues in decision-making processes or due process proceedings.
- E. When acting in an administrative capacity:

1. Acts fairly, consistently, and prudently in the exercise of authority with colleagues, subordinates, students, and parents and legal guardians.
2. Evaluates the work of other educators using appropriate procedures and established statutes and regulations.
3. Protects the rights of others in the educational setting, and does not retaliate, coerce, or intentionally intimidate others in the exercise of rights protected by law.
4. Recommends persons for employment, promotion, or transfer according to their professional qualifications, the needs and policies of the LEA, and according to the law.

### **III. Commitment to the Profession**

- A. Provides accurate credentials and information regarding licensure or employment and does not knowingly assist others in providing untruthful information.
- B. Takes action to remedy an observed violation of the Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators and promotes understanding of the principles of professional ethics.
- C. Pursues growth and development in the practice of the profession and uses that knowledge in improving the educational opportunities, experiences, and performance of students and colleagues.

## **Standards of Professional Conduct**

- I. The standards listed in this Section shall be generally accepted for the education profession and shall be the basis for State Board review of performance of professional educators. These standards shall establish mandatory prohibitions and requirements for educators. Violation of these standards shall subject an educator to investigation and disciplinary action by the SBE or LEA.
- II. Professional educators shall adhere to the standards of professional conduct contained in this Rule. Any intentional act or omission that violates these standards is prohibited.
  - A. Generally recognized professional standards. The educator shall practice these professional standards of federal, state, and local governing bodies.
  - B. Personal conduct. The educator shall serve as a positive role model for students, parents, and the community. Because the educator is entrusted with the care and education of small children and adolescents, the educator shall demonstrate a high standard of personal character and conduct.
  - C. Honesty. The educator shall not engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation in the performance of professional duties including the following:
    1. statement of professional qualifications;
    2. application or recommendation for professional employment, promotion, or licensure;
    3. application or recommendation for college or university admission, scholarship, grant, academic award, or similar benefit;
    4. representation of completion of college or staff development credit;

5. evaluation or grading of students or personnel;
  6. submission of financial or program compliance reports submitted to state, federal, or other governmental agencies;
  7. submission of information in the course of an official inquiry by the employing LEA or the SBE related to facts of unprofessional conduct, provided, however, that an educator shall be given adequate notice of the allegations and may be represented by legal counsel; and
  8. submission of information in the course of an investigation by a law enforcement agency, child protective services, or any other agency with the right to investigate, regarding school-related criminal activity; provided, however, that an educator shall be entitled to decline to give evidence to law enforcement if such evidence may tend to incriminate the educator as that term is defined by the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.
- D. Proper remunerative conduct. The educator shall not solicit current students or parents of students to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator in a private remunerative capacity. An educator shall not tutor for remuneration students currently assigned to the educator's classes, unless approved by the local superintendent. An educator shall not accept any compensation, benefit, or thing of value other than the educator's regular compensation for the performance of any service that the educator is required to render in the course and scope of the educator's employment. This Rule shall not restrict performance of any overtime or supplemental services at the request of the LEA; nor shall it apply to or restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens of minimal value offered and accepted openly from students, parents, or other persons in recognition or appreciation of service.
- E. Conduct with students. The educator shall treat all students with respect. The educator shall not commit any abusive act or sexual exploitation with, to, or in the presence of a student, whether or not that student is or has been under the care or supervision of that educator, as defined below:
1. any use of language that is considered profane, vulgar, or demeaning;
  2. any sexual act;
  3. any solicitation of a sexual act, whether written, verbal, or physical;
  4. any act of child abuse, as defined by law;
  5. any act of sexual harassment, as defined by law; and
  6. any intentional solicitation, encouragement, or consummation of a romantic or physical relationship with a student, or any sexual contact with a student. The term "romantic relationship" shall include dating any student.
- G. Confidential information. The educator shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information regarding students or their family members that has been obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure is required or permitted by law or professional standards, or is necessary for the personal safety of the student or others. Rights of others. The educator shall not willfully or maliciously violate the constitutional or civil rights of a student, parent/legal guardian, or colleague.

- H. Required reports. The educator shall make all reports required by Chapter 115C of the North Carolina General Statutes.
- I. Alcohol or controlled substance abuse. The educator shall not:
  - 1. be under the influence of, possess, use, or consume on school premises or at a school-sponsored activity a controlled substance as defined by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 90-95, the Controlled Substances Act, without a prescription authorizing such use;
  - 2. be under the influence of, possess, use, or consume an alcoholic beverage or a controlled substance on school premises or at a school-sponsored activity involving students; or
  - 3. furnish alcohol or a controlled substance to any student except as indicated in the professional duties of administering legally prescribed medications.
- J. Compliance with criminal laws. The educator shall not commit any act referred to in G.S. 115C-332 and any felony under the laws of the United States or of any state.
- K. Public funds and property. The educator shall not misuse public funds or property, funds of a school-related organization, or colleague's funds. The educator shall account for funds collected from students, colleagues, or parents/legal guardians. The educator shall not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses, or pay.
- L. Scope of professional practice. The educator shall not perform any act as an employee in a position for which licensure is required by the rules of the SBE or by Chapter 115C or the North Carolina General Statutes during any period in which the educator's license has been suspended or revoked.
- M. Conduct related to ethical violations. The educator shall not directly or indirectly use or threaten to use any official authority or influence in any manner that tends to discourage, restrain, interfere with, coerce, or discriminate against any subordinate or any licensee who in good faith reports, discloses, divulges, or otherwise brings to the attention of an LEA, the SBE, or any other public agency authorized to take remedial action, any facts or information relative to actual or suspected violation of any law regulating the duties of persons serving in the public school system, including but not limited to these Rules.

(Reference: G.S. 115C-295.3, Title 16, North Carolina Administrative Code);  
Eff. May 1, 1998.

## Communicable Diseases | Employee Safety

Guilford County Schools strives to provide a secure environment for all students and employees. All efforts are made to protect students' and employees' rights and to control communicable diseases. All decisions regarding the employment status of employees with communicable diseases will be made on a case-by-case basis. For more information, contact the Benefits Department.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GBRAB)

## Conflict of Interest

The Guilford County Board of Education recognizes that all business transactions in which the school system engages, not only must be within the law, but also must respect generally accepted fair trade practices. The Board further recognizes the need for all employees to refrain from engaging in inappropriate business-related behavior. Employees of the school system shall not:

- engage in selling goods or services to the Board.
- engage in or have a financial interest in any activity that conflicts or raises a reasonable question of conflict with duties or responsibilities in the school system.
- engage in any type of private business during the employee's school day or at school site.
- engage in work of any type where the source of information for a customer, client, or employer originates from school system data.
- accept gifts from any person or groups desiring or doing business with the school system, except for nominally valued instructional products or advertising items, which are widely distributed.
- provide employee directories to anyone who wishes to use them for pecuniary purposes.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GAG)

## Corporal Punishment and Force

The Board believes that a well-disciplined school system can be maintained without the use of corporal punishment and force. As a result, Board of Education policy prohibits the use of corporal punishment by principals, assistant principals, teachers, substitute teachers, other school system personnel, student teachers or volunteers. While the district prohibits the use of corporal punishment as a means of discipline, school personnel may use reasonable force to control behavior or to remove a person from the scene in the following situations:

- to quell a disturbance threatening injury to others;
- to obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects on the person or within the control of a student;
- for self-defense;
- for the protection of persons or property; and
- to maintain order on school property, in the classroom or at a school-related activity on or off school property.

(Reference: G.S. 115C-390; Board of Education Policy JD)

## Criminal Records Check | Employees and Substitutes

Board Policy GBDC requires a criminal records check on newly hired employees including substitutes. A criminal records check will also be conducted on a random or rotating basis on all annually rehired and current employees including substitutes.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GBDC; Administrative Procedure GBDC-P)

## Criminal Records Check | Volunteers

If you are interested in volunteering at a particular school, please contact the school's office and ask to speak with the volunteer coordinator. If you'd like to volunteer, but don't know where to start or which schools could use more assistance or your expertise, please contact GCS District Relations at 336-370-8355. Most volunteer duties, particularly those that allow volunteers unsupervised interaction with GCS students, require a criminal background check in keeping with school board policy. To register for both supervised and unsupervised volunteer opportunities, or to start the volunteer background check process, please go to [www.gcsvolunteers.com](http://www.gcsvolunteers.com). Individuals who provide false information in any way, may be denied as a volunteer.

Reasonable background inquiries and checks are required for all volunteers (interns, student teachers, tutors or similar roles) who may have unsupervised contact with students. The volunteer must complete a [Volunteer Registration](#). The form must include sufficient personal information to allow the district to complete an in-state criminal record check and to investigate any out-of-state/federal arrests or convictions. The district's Human Resources Office will review the results and notify the principal and volunteer coordinator of the results and recommendations. **No volunteer as defined above should be used without a completed background check and an affirmative recommendation.** Volunteers who registered online to volunteer the previous school year, should log into the site, pull up his/her application, edit any information which has changed, then click on submit at the bottom of the page to reactivate the application. (Reference: Board of Education Policy GBDCA)

## Disposal of Board Property

Individual employees are not authorized to give away, sell or otherwise dispose of school district property. Disposals must be handled by appropriate staff in accordance with state statutory requirements and local policy governance limitations. (Reference: G.S. 160-A-266(C); Board of Education Policy DO)

## Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace

Due to the commitment to a drug and alcohol free workplace, it is the policy of Guilford County Schools that the work environment is free of the presence of alcoholic beverages or unlawful controlled substances and that employees perform their job assignments safely, efficiently, and without the adverse influence of alcohol or controlled substances. Therefore, the school system prohibits all employees from possessing, using, manufacturing, dispensing, selling, distributing, or being under the influence of illegal drugs, and from the use, sale, distribution or possession of drug paraphernalia. All employees are prohibited from unlawfully possessing, using, manufacturing, dispensing, selling, distributing or being under the influence of alcohol. Consideration will be given as to whether rehabilitation will be offered to employees who have

difficulty with drugs or alcohol, so that they may comply with the standards set by this policy. A summary of this policy will be given to each employee by his/her supervisor.

### **Scope**

This policy governs each employee (1) during school hours, (2) while on any property owned or leased by the Board, (3) at any time during which the employee is acting in the course and scope of his/her employment with the Board, and/or (4) at any other time that the employee's violation of this policy has a direct and adverse effect upon the performance of his/her job.

### **Condition of Employment**

It is a condition of continued employment that each individual comply with this policy and notify his/her supervisor of any charge, conviction (or plea of guilty, no contest, or "nolo contendere") of any criminal drug or alcohol statute no later than the next business day after such charge, conviction or plea. Any employee whose duty it is to drive a vehicle or repair equipment or vehicles must comply with the policy and notify his/her supervisor of an arrest or charge of violation of any criminal drug statute, or any motor vehicle violation involving the use of alcohol or controlled substances at any time. The employee must notify his/her supervisor of any charges for those offenses no later than the next business day after being charged.

### **Violations**

Violation of this policy will subject an individual to personnel action including, but not limited to: 1. termination of employment, 2. the requirement that the employee satisfactorily participate in an Administration-approved drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation, 3. suspension, with or without pay, 4. conditional continuation of employment, or 5. any combination of these actions. The acts prohibited by this policy do not include the lawful and proper use of drugs prescribed by a doctor or over-the-counter medications. However, no employee must report to work or engage in normal duties, if he/she is visibly and/or knowingly impaired by drugs prescribed by a doctor or over-the-counter medications. Such conduct is considered improper and may result in further disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

### **Testing**

The school system reserves the right to test employees whose duty it is to drive a vehicle, repair vehicles or equipment, and provide armed security. This policy extends to other persons in similar safety positions any time prior to or during employment. The system reserves the right to test any employee upon reasonable suspicion of drug or alcohol use.

Any employee who refuses to submit to a diagnostic test to detect alcohol and/or drug use or refuses to submit to search procedures after reasonable suspicion is established may be suspended immediately pending consideration of a decision to terminate employment. (Reference: Board of Education Policy GA)

## Emergency Closings

In case of school cancellation, delayed opening and/or early dismissal of school due to emergency and/or hazardous conditions, the following procedure governs all employees. The official closing notice will be delivered via the CONNECT ED telephone message system, placed on the district's public access television channel and posted on the district's Web site. Television and radio stations will be notified when necessary, early on the mornings(s) of hazardous conditions. When school is canceled for the day due to hazardous conditions, the canceled day(s) will be rescheduled in the school calendar at the direction of the Superintendent.

### Ten-Month Employees

If school is canceled for the day, 10-month employees, all teachers and School Food Service Managers should report to work at the normal starting time or select one of the following options:

1. unscheduled vacation, if available,
2. make up time as arranged with the principal/supervisor,
3. personal leave (licensed instructional personnel only), or
4. leave without pay.

It is the employee's responsibility to contact the principal/supervisor to regarding these intentions.

If school is canceled for the day on a mandated or optional teacher workday, employees who are scheduled to work (teachers and affected 10-month employees only) should report at the normal starting time or select one of the following options:

1. unscheduled vacation, if available,
2. make up time with approval of principal/supervisor,
3. personal leave (licensed instructional personnel only), or
4. leave without pay.

In the case of inclement weather, Student Nutrition Services employees make up the missed day when the school day is rescheduled. For example, if the make-up date is a teacher workday, an SNS employee may use annual leave for the day missed due to inclement weather; if the make-up day is a non-paid day on the SNS calendar, the missed day due to inclement weather becomes the non-paid day. SNS managers are advised via email or supervisors whether to report to work based on delivery schedules.

It is the employee's responsibility to contact the principal/supervisor to regarding these intentions.

### Eleven and Twelve-Month Employees

If school is canceled for the day, 11-month and 12-month employees (including central office personnel) should report to work at the normal starting time or select one of the following options:

1. unscheduled vacation, if available,

2. make up time with approval principal/supervisor, or
3. leave without pay.

It is the employee's responsibility to contact the principal/supervisor to regarding these intentions.

Any change in the time for employees to report to work will be announced by the Superintendent at the time of the school cancellation announcement.

**Delay for Students:** If school opening is delayed for students, school-based, non-administrative instructional employees are expected to report at least fifteen (15) minutes before the time designated for students to arrive; this time (delayed opening) will not have to be made up. All other employees are expected to report at the regular work times. There is an exception for bus drivers and child nutrition employees whose schedules, under such conditions, are to be set in advance by their supervisors. If for some reason meeting this timeline is not possible, the employee must contact the principal/supervisor about arrival time and/or possible options to take leave or to make up time missed.

**Early Dismissal:** If school is dismissed early, teachers and other school-based employees will be dismissed fifteen (15) minutes after all students have departed. This time will not have to be made up. A principal (or a designated representative) must remain at the school until notified by the Director of Transportation (or a representative) that all students who ride school buses assigned to that school have been delivered to their afternoon destinations. Central office personnel will be dismissed at the discretion of the Superintendent. However, when schedules are modified due to excessive heat, all staff members are expected to work the normal work schedule.

\*This procedure excludes calendar make-up provisions for year-round schools. Following the loss of day(s) by year-round schools, the principal must submit a proposed make-up plan to his/her executive director and the calendar coordinator for review and approval.

**Make-up Time:** Make-up time must be within the guidelines of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Non-exempt employees may not work more than 40 hours a week. (Please refer to "Overtime" section of this handbook.)

**Employees Working After Hours:** ACES group leaders/clerks and other employees, who work after-school hours, must follow the guidelines above for canceled school days. (Reference: North Carolina G.S. 115-C-316(2); Administrative Procedure AFC-P)

## Employee Absences

### Notification

When absent from duty for whatever reason, an employee must notify the appropriate supervisor of the inability to report to work by the scheduled time, using procedure designated by the supervisor. If the employee fails to notify the appropriate supervisor (or designee) of the absence, a salary deduction will be made for time not worked.

## **Unapproved Absences**

Unexplained absences or leaving the work site without authorization will not be tolerated and will be considered sufficient cause for discharge. The appropriate supervisor or the Human Resources Department may require at any time, a statement from a medical doctor or other acceptable proof that the employee was unable to work. This documentation is required for absences of more than five (5) consecutive days.

## **Automated Substitute Employee Management System (AESOP)**

Guilford County Schools has installed ASEOP, an automated substitute employee management system. AESOP tracks the reporting of employee absences and calls substitute employees when as needed.

All school-based employees, with the exception of custodian and child nutrition personnel, are expected to report each absence to this system by telephone or through AESOP Internet access, regardless of whether a substitute is required or obtained. Employees will receive training at their respective work sites to properly access AESOP and report absences. The requirement to report absences via AESOP does not relieve an employee of any additional absence reporting required by the principal or supervisor.

## **Equal Employment Opportunity**

The Guilford County Board of Education believes in the dignity of all individuals and the worth of their labors. To this end, the Board will ensure that all applicants for employment and all employees are employed, assigned, supervised, promoted, compensated and terminated in full compliance with state and federal equal opportunity statutes. No applicant for employment or current employee will experience discrimination based on race, creed, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, physical handicap, sexual orientation or disability. The policy does not extend any rights beyond those granted by state and federal law.

Concerns in this area should be discussed with the supervisor or with the supervisor's supervisor. If concerns remain, employees should contact the Federal Compliance Officer in the Information/Special Services Division, or the Executive Director of Human Resources or Chief Human Resources Officer responsible for personnel.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GAAA Legal Reference: Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; American Disabilities Act, 1991)

## **Grievances | Employees**

The Guilford County Board of Education encourages the administration to actively attempt to resolve differences and to reduce potential sources of conflict between employees and administrators. It is usually more effective for an employee and his/her immediate supervisor to resolve potential conflicts through open and informal communication. Open, effective channels of

communication among all employees, administrators and the Board will be established and maintained.

Any employee who has a grievance against the school district or against another employee within the district must have the opportunity for an orderly presentation and impartial review of the grievance. The grievant will be permitted representation at any formal step in the grievance process. The policy and its accompanying administrative procedure address both formal and informal grievances, the right to representation, procedures and timelines, confidentiality, bypassing rights and release time.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GAE; Administrative Procedure GAE-P)

## Harassment, Bullying, Discrimination of Staff | Prohibition

The Guilford County Board of Education believes that all employees are entitled to work in school-related environments free of harassment, bullying and discrimination. The policy addressing harassment, bullying and discrimination includes definitions of each of these terms.

### Reporting

Any employee who believes he/she has been the victim of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination at the work site or as a result of district employment is encouraged to report the alleged acts, including the specific facts of the incident(s) and the name(s) of the individual(s) to the immediate supervisor in a timely manner.

### Human Resources Intervention

If the immediate supervisor is directly involved or if the employee is more comfortable discussing the concern with someone in Human Resources, the employee should report such acts to the Chief Human Resources Officer or the Executive Director for Human Resources. Where members of the Board, the Superintendent or any senior staff members are involved, the employee should report such acts to the Board attorney. An immediate investigation of the claims will take place and upon evidence of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GAMA)

## Harassment, Bullying, Discrimination of Students | Prohibition

The employees of Guilford County Schools are expected to provide learning environments for students that are free of harassment, bullying and discrimination. Any student who believes that he/she has been subjected to harassment, bullying and/or discrimination by any employee(s) of Guilford County Schools, and any student or employee who has knowledge of such activity or other inappropriate staff-student relations should report the facts of the incident(s) immediately to the student's principal or to the supervisor of the person reporting the incident. The report should also

include the names of all individuals involved in any material way. There will be an immediate investigation of the incident.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GAMAA)

## Health Examination Certificates

Upon initial employment, all public school employees, and those who have been separated from public school employment more than one school year, must file a completed Guilford County Schools/North Carolina Public Schools "Health Examination Certificate" certifying their freedom from any communicable disease, including tuberculosis or any disease, physical or mental, which would impair the person's ability to perform his/her job duties prior to reporting to work. The "Health Examination Certificate" must be on the form supplied by the school district and can be signed by a physician, physician's assistant or nurse practitioner licensed to practice in North Carolina. Individuals in these same categories with unrestricted licenses in other states can complete the Health Examination Certificate. Health Certificates are available on the Guilford County Schools Web site. The local Board or the Superintendent or his/her designee may require any employee to take a physical examination whenever deemed necessary.

(Reference: G.S. 115C-323)

## Identification Badges

### Badge Display

All permanent or interim employees are expected to visibly display, attached to their persons, the approved Guilford County Schools photo identification badge while on any property owned or leased by the Board during school hours or at any time the employee is acting in the course and scope of employment with the Board.

Identification badges will be provided by the school district upon employment and remain the property of Guilford County Schools. Persons who leave employment of Guilford County Schools are required to return their ID badges to their immediate supervisors.

### Replacement Badges

A lost badge may be replaced at the employee's expense (\$4.00) and may be requested by calling the Benefits Department at 370-8348.

### Event Admission with Badge

Guilford County Schools currently extends the courtesy of free admission to most middle and high school athletic events upon presentation of the identification badge. Free admission is for the **employee only**. Employees may be required to present additional picture identification for admission. Identification badges are not valid for admission to state play-off contests. Admission to these contests is controlled by the North Carolina High School Athletic Association.

# Overtime

It is the policy of Guilford County Schools to abide by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and its subsequent amendments. The overtime policy is applicable to all employees of Guilford County Schools who are covered under the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. The district's intention is to assure good faith compliance with FLSA to the extent applicable to Guilford County Schools.

## Exempt Classification

All employees classified as "exempt" from the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act are paid for the accomplishment of assigned accountabilities rather than the number of hours worked in a work week. For example, a full-time exempt employee is expected to work a minimum of 40 hours per work week. A full-time exempt teacher is expected to work a minimum of 37 ½ hours per work week. Hours worked in excess of the minimum by an exempt employee performing work that is usual and customary, are considered "accomplishment of assigned accountabilities" for which there is no additional compensation—in time off or pay. The category of "exempt" employees includes, but is not limited to, teachers, administrators and certain supervisory staff.

## Non-exempt Classification

All employees classified as "Non-exempt" from the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act must be paid for overtime hours worked or given compensatory time off. Overtime is paid or compensatory time given to non-exempt employees for hours actually worked in excess of 40 hours in a work week. However, work schedules can be reduced within a work week to offset extra hours worked earlier in the week so as not to exceed 40 hours, thereby avoiding an "overtime" situation. It should be noted that Teacher Assistants work a 37.5 hour work week with a daily lunch included.

The work week begins Saturday at 12:01 a.m. and ends the following Friday at 12:00 midnight. The category of "non-exempt" employees includes, but is not limited to, teacher assistants, custodians, school food service workers and certain office support employees.

## Approval to Work Overtime

No overtime hours should be worked by non-exempt employees without prior approval of the employee's department head and, when for overtime pay, approval by the divisional Chief, responsible to budget for such expenses. Unauthorized work by a non-exempt employee that is nonetheless endured or permitted is still considered work time by FLSA. Therefore, no non-exempt employee should work without the appropriate approval, prior to or after regularly scheduled hours, because such time would be considered overtime when in excess of 40 hours in the work week, even though the work was not specifically authorized.

Supervisors/Department Heads are responsible for ensuring that overtime hours are authorized, recorded and properly documented for compensatory time off or overtime pay in accordance with established record-keeping forms and instructions. Non-exempt employees working beyond the normal work week without specific approval, and supervisors who permit this, will be subject to disciplinary action.

(Reference: Fair Labor Standards Act; Guilford County Schools Auxiliary Services Procedures Manual)

## Professional Development

The Guilford County School system encourages employees to use all available opportunities for professional development. Specialized training sessions, in addition to renewal credit opportunities, are made available to employees of the district.

### GCS-Sponsored Activities

Individual schools or various divisions within Guilford County Schools often conduct staff development activities that award CEU's to employees who participate in these courses. In these cases, the Office of Professional Development must approve the workshop before renewal credit can be offered. Requests should be made four weeks prior to the start date of the workshop.

**Standards:** Workshops must meet the following standards:

1. To receive credit, a workshop must have a minimum of five (5) clock hours of direct training by an instructor. (.5 CEUs will be granted)
2. Workshop meeting times should be a minimum of two (2) hours per session. CEU's are only granted for up to 6 hours of staff development per day.
3. For all-day workshops, a one-hour lunch break must be provided to all participants. It is not acceptable to reduce or eliminate the lunch break to release participants early from the workshop.
4. For a 10 hour course, only one (1) of the 10 hours can be an outside assignment.
5. Hours of credit for online courses are determined collaboratively by the online design team and the Office of Professional Development.
6. Course content and instructional activities should be designed in a sequential manner to achieve outcomes for a specific population.
7. The course must be led by qualified personnel and directly supervised by the sponsoring school or department.
8. Credit is granted on the basis of course completion.
9. **No partial credit can be given to any workshop participant.** Participants who miss more than 30 cumulative minutes of any workshop are not eligible for credit.
10. Participants must obtain a PD Account in order to register for approved GCS/site-based courses. Participants who attend, but do not register before the last day of the course, will not receive CEU credit.

**Approval:** The Professional Development contact designated by the school's principal must create the online course description and session information and request approval from the Office of Professional Development. Course approval submissions should be completed four (4) weeks prior to the start date of the workshop.

**Literacy Course Approval:** The SS-3 "Application for Literacy Course Approval" form should be submitted with the online request for course approval if literacy credit is requested. The form

should be completed and submitted electronically to the Office of Professional Development at [profdev@gcsnc.com](mailto:profdev@gcsnc.com).

**Registration and Credit:** Upon approval, the workshop will be posted on the Professional Development website. Participants should register for the approved GCS workshop prior to the start date of the workshop. Instructors are responsible for printing the attendance sheet, noting participant credit, signing the workshop roster and submitting it to the Office of Professional Development, at Laughlin, 7911 Summerfield Road, Summerfield, NC 27358, within three (3) working days after completion of the workshop. Upon receipt of the roster, attendance will be marked and CEU credit posted for the participants. Documentation can also be emailed to [profdev@gcsnc.com](mailto:profdev@gcsnc.com). If documentation is emailed or faxed, the original should be kept by the employee.

### Requesting Prior Approval for Non-GCS Courses

All events that are not sponsored by GCS must receive prior approval. To request prior approval to earn renewal credits for attending a **NON-GCS** course, workshop, seminar, conference, etc., the employee should request approval via the GCS Professional Development website before attending an event for CEU credit. Failure to obtain prior approval, may disallow CEU credit. Requests should be made three weeks prior to the start date of an event. CEU credit cannot be awarded for any course with less than five (5) hours of instruction.

**Request Prior Approval for a Non-GCS Event:** Requests should be made three (3) weeks prior to the start date of an event. CEU credits may not be posted if the participant does not get prior approval for the event. You may request prior approval online at: <http://www.gcsnc.com>. **Go to: district/employees/employee resources/professional development.**

The Office of Professional Development will review the request, and if it is not approved for credit, the employee will be informed by GCS email. If the request is not approved, notification will be sent within two to three (2-3) weeks upon receipt of the request.

### After the Event

To receive credit, a copy of the Certificate of Completion giving the amount of contact hours and/or CEUs must be submitted to the Office of Professional Development at Laughlin Professional Development Center, 7911 Summerfield Road, Summerfield, NC 27358. Documentation can also be emailed to [profdev@gcsnc.com](mailto:profdev@gcsnc.com). The original document should be kept by the person requesting credit.

- ✓ College Credit: Submit **Transcript (or copy)**. Only university/college transcripts will be accepted.
- ✓ Non-College Course: Submit a copy of the **Certificate of Completion** and **Agenda** if CEU credit is not printed on the certificate.
- ✓ Conference: Submit a copy of the **Certificate of Completion, Conference Syllabus**, and **SS-4** form that can be downloaded from the GCS Professional Development website.

## Checking Approval Status

Employees may check approval status online at: <http://www.gcsnc.com>. **Go to: district/employees/employee resources/professional development.**

Credit will **not be recorded** until the appropriate document is submitted to the Office of Professional Development, at Laughlin, 7911 Summerfield Road, Summerfield, NC 27358. Documentation can also be emailed to [profdev@gcsnc.com](mailto:profdev@gcsnc.com).

## Professional Development | National Board Certification

CEU credit is earned for the completion of National Board Certification. Teachers may choose to use the CEU's for the current renewal cycle or "bank" them for the next renewal cycle. In order to receive credit, the teacher submits a copy of the congratulatory letter from NBPTS to the Staffing Department and indicates if the renewal credits are to be applied to the current renewal cycle or the next cycle. Teachers **may not** use a portion of the NBPTS CEU credit for the current renewal cycle and "bank" a portion for the next cycle. Completion of the process for National Board Certification is acceptable to complete renewal requirements for an individual's next renewal cycle, even if the individual does not achieve national certification.

Questions concerning **licensure renewal** may be directed to the Staffing Department at 378-8806. Questions concerning the **renewal credit approval process** should be directed to the Office of Professional Development at 665-8003.

Refer to the Guilford County Schools Professional Development website for additional information.

## Reporting Alleged Violations of Law or Ordinance

As employees of Guilford County Schools, all staff members are expected to observe and obey all laws and ordinances, as well as all policies and procedures of our Board of Education.

### Duty to Report

Any employee charged with or arrested for any violation(s) of a criminal, or serious traffic vehicular law (e.g. vehicular homicide, hit and run) or ordinance, or any such law classified as a felony or for which a conviction could lead to incarceration, must report this fact in writing to the administrator in charge of the department, office or school to which the employee is assigned **no later than the next scheduled business day.**

**Hospitalization or Incarceration:** In cases involving employee hospitalization and/or incarceration (jail) involving the stated violation, the employee must report the alleged violation within 24 hours

after release. The report must include all pertinent facts concerning the alleged violation(s). Following receipt by the administrator, the confidential report will be forwarded no later than one scheduled business day, to the Executive Director for Human Resources or administrative designee for review. After review, the Executive Director will provide recommendations as to what action, if any, is appropriate. Failure to truthfully report charges, as noted above, may subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

## Updates

It is the employee's responsibility to keep his/her administrator apprised of the judicial process in the matter. Upon judicial action, the employee must report the disposition and pertinent facts in writing to the administrator no later than the next scheduled business day following adjudication. (Reference: Board of Education Policy GBDC)

## School Calendars

The Guilford County Board of Education annually adopts a school calendar. The calendar may be adjusted for inclement weather or other emergency situations. The district calendar as well as the calendars for each school may be found on the GCS Web site at [School Calendars](#).

## Sexual Harassment of Students | Prohibition

The employees of Guilford County Schools are expected to provide learning environments for students that are free of sexual harassment. **Staff shall not engage in a romantic or sexual relationship with any student enrolled in Guilford County Schools whether or not it is consensual.** Any student who believes that he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment by any employee(s) of Guilford County Schools and any student or employee who has knowledge of sexual harassment or inappropriate staff-student relations should report:

1. the facts of the incidents and
2. the names of all the individuals involved in any material way immediately to the student's principal or to the supervisor of the person reporting the incident. There will be an immediate investigation of the incident.

It is a Class I felony for teachers, school administrators, student teachers or coaches at any age, and other school personnel at least four years older than a student to take indecent liberties with that student during or after the time both were present together in the same school, but before the student ceases to be a student at that school. School personnel who are not teachers, school administrators, student teachers or coaches, **and** who are less than four years older than the student, who take indecent liberties with a student victim are guilty of a Class A-1 misdemeanor. Consent is not a defense. Legal marriage to the student is a defense to this crime. (Reference: Board of Education Policy GAMAA; G.S. 14-202.4)

## Smoke-free Workplace, Tobacco Use, E-cigarettes

The use of tobacco products on or in any school property, or at any school-sponsored activity or event (regardless of location) is prohibited. Tobacco products are defined as cigarettes, cigars, blunts, bidis, pipes, chewing tobacco, snuff, and any other items containing or reasonably resembling tobacco or tobacco products. E-cigarettes are considered cigarettes for purposes of this prohibition and are not permitted.

This policy will be strictly enforced, as follows:

1. Employees in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.
2. Student discipline for infractions will continue to be as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.
3. Others who violate this policy will be asked to appropriately dispose of tobacco products. If they do not promptly comply, they will be asked to leave school property immediately.

(Reference: Board Policy CPGA; Senate bill 530/S.L. 2013-165)

## Selection of Instructional Materials

The Board of Education recognizes the importance of using a variety of instructional materials in addition to adopted textbooks, to meet the instructional needs of students. Materials for classrooms and school library media centers will be selected by the appropriate professional personnel in consultation with the administration, faculty, students and the community. Final purchase decisions will rest with the Superintendent or his designee. If instructional materials and/or activities contain content, language or context(s) that may be sensitive to students or parents, approval of the site administrator is required prior to use.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy IFA: Administrative Procedure IFA-P)

## Social Media Guidelines

Guilford County Schools realizes that part of 21st century learning is adapting to the changing methods of communication. The importance of teachers, students and parents engaging, collaborating, learning and sharing in these digital environments is a part of 21st century learning. To this aim, Guilford County Schools has adapted the following guidelines to provide direction for instructional employees, students and the School District community when participating in online social media activities. Whether or not an employee chooses to participate in a blog, wiki, online social network or any other form of online publishing or discussion is his or her own decision. Free speech protects individuals who want to participate in social media, but the laws and courts have ruled that school districts can discipline employees if their speech, including personal online postings, disrupts school operations.

These guidelines have been created as a resource for you. It is important to create an atmosphere of trust and individual accountability. Keep in mind that information produced by

GCS employees is a reflection on the entire District and is subject to the District's Acceptable Use Policy. Personal postings, even if marked private, may also be subject to relevant GCS policies and procedures, as well as to relevant local, state and federal laws. By accessing, creating or contributing to any blogs, wikis, podcasts or other social media for classroom or district use, you agree to abide by these guidelines. Please read them carefully before participating in any social media application.

## **What is Social Media?**

User-created content online designed in a collaborative environment where users share opinions, knowledge and information with each other.

Tools include, but are not limited to:

- Blogs (Blogger, WordPress, etc.)
- Wikis (Wikispaces, Google Sites, etc.)
- Social Networking Sites (Facebook, Ning, MySpace, YouTube, LinkedIn, etc.)
- Photo and Video Sharing sites (YouTube, Flickr, etc.)
- Social Bookmarking (Diigo, Delicious)
- Podcasting and Vodcasting

## **Personal Responsibility**

Guilford County Schools encourages district employees with a personal online presence to be mindful of the information they post. Your online behavior should reflect the same professional and personal standards of honesty, respect and consideration that you use face-to-face and in work-related settings. Please note that even if you delete personal information, it still may be stored on the Web site's server for a longer period of time. Information that is marked "private" rarely is private on the Internet. It is very easy for "friends" to copy and paste information about you and send it or forward it to others, for example. There is no realistic expectation of privacy on the World Wide Web.

## **Security and Privacy Settings**

The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the digital world. By virtue of identifying yourself as a GCS employee online, you are now connected to colleagues, students, parents and the school community. Use these connections wisely and well. You should also ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work at GCS and your role as a public school/State employee. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the appropriate security settings for any Social media (personal or professional) that you may use. Be sure that the settings are such that any personal content may only be viewed by your intended audience.

Be aware that, even if your privacy settings are set properly, it is still possible for anyone who you've allowed to see your profile to copy and paste text and send it to someone else. It is also easy for others to "tag" or identify you in photos that they publish with or without your knowledge and permission. Similarly, if you enable settings such as Facebook's ability to allow "friends of friends" to view your content, it is extremely likely that unintended viewers will have access to pictures and other personal content.

## **Student Communications**

It is inappropriate to use email, text messaging, instant messaging or social networking sites to discuss with a student a matter that does not pertain to school-related activities. Appropriate discussions would include the student's homework, class activity, school sport or club or other school-sponsored activity. Electronic communications with students are to be sent simultaneously to multiple recipients, not to just one student, except where the communication is clearly school-related and inappropriate for persons other than the individual student to receive (for example, emailing a message about a student's grades).

## **“Friending”**

Engaging in personal social-networking friendships on Myspace, Facebook or other social networking sites is prohibited with students, and strongly discouraged with parents or guardians of students. The District recognizes that because of the tight-knit community of GCS, many staff members may have students or parents of students that are family members or close personal friends. However, the District cautions staff members against engaging in such social-networking friendships with these individuals. Use your official, school- or work-related page(s) instead.

A recommendation for staff to respond to “friend” requests on their personal pages is: “If you are a student or parent requesting to be my “friend,” please do not be surprised or offended if I ignore your request. As an employee of Guilford County Schools, District procedures and practices discourage me from “friending” students or parents on my personal pages. I would encourage you to friend our school’s (and/or classroom’s, department’s, Guilford County Schools’ Facebook pages, etc.)”

## **District Image**

Material that employees post on social networks that is publicly available to those in the school community must reflect the professional image applicable to the employee's position and not impair the employee's capacity to maintain the respect of students and parents/guardians or impair the employee's ability to serve as a role model for children.

## **Professional Responsibility**

While social media can be a powerful communication tool and an educational tool for students and parents, GCS employees are personally responsible for the content they publish online. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time—protect your privacy.

Remember that social media in the classroom is an extension of your physical classroom. What is inappropriate in your classroom should be deemed inappropriate online. Teachers who use social networking to interact with students and/or parents in an educational manner or as a communication tool must find ways to interact without giving students and parents access to their personal information and posts. Many social network sites allow you to create “groups” or “pages” where you can interact with students without giving them access to your personal account. Please see detailed Facebook guidelines for more information. When contributing online do not post confidential student information. Do not post pictures of any students on your personal sites.

Use a GCS provided email as your email contact for official or school-related pages. Do not use your GCS provided email as a username or email contact for personal pages.

Please remember that all GCS policies and procedures, as well as relevant local, state and federal laws (copyright, fair use, Family Education Right to Privacy Act, personnel statutes, criminal statutes, etc.) apply to social media communications.

## Use of Copyrighted Materials

Guilford County Schools requires that all employees be knowledgeable of and adhere to all provisions of current Federal copyright law, *Title 17* of US Code, and Congressional “fair use” guidelines. The district recognizes and supports the limitations on unauthorized duplication and use of copyrighted materials in all formats, as well as contractual and licensing agreements pertaining to the instructional use of all formats, including electronically transmitted materials. Willful or serious violations are considered to be in violation of expected standards of behavior for employees, students and school visitors and may result in disciplinary action in accordance with board policy. The legal and insurance protection of the district will not extend to employees who unlawfully copy or unlawfully use copyrighted materials.

(Reference: *Title 17* of US Code; Congressional “Fair Use” Guidelines)

## Use of Electronic Transmissions Capabilities

The Guilford County Board of Education recognizes that technology and the Internet offer staff members the resources from thousands of computers and millions of individual people all over the world. Staff members may have access to email, information and news, advertisements, discussion groups and university and government libraries around the world.

### **Business Use**

Guilford County’s email, office communications and Internet capabilities have been established to enable staff members to more efficiently perform their duties, to support research and education and to extend the resources of Guilford County Schools. To that end, all uses of electronic transmission capabilities must support the goals and educational philosophy of the school district.

### **No Expectation of Privacy**

Employees should be aware that there is no reasonable expectation of privacy with regard to their use of, and transmission of information over, district-owned computers and computer networks. The school district reserves the right to monitor such use and transmission and to take appropriate disciplinary action if it can be reasonably determined that an employee has violated acceptable use standards.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy EFE)

# Use of Technology

All technology resources employed by Guilford County Schools should be used in a responsible, legal and ethical manner. To encourage responsible and ethical behavior, guidelines for using the Internet and other emerging technologies have been instituted. This section includes technology-related guidelines written to safeguard students, protect the district and its staff from liability and protect the district's investment in technology.

## Acceptable Use Policy

Guilford County Schools' Internet connection has been established in the belief that the information and interaction available are valuable additions to educational resources. The first Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) was written in 1996. The current Board Policy EFE-Acceptable Use of Technology and Procedure, and EFE-P Acceptable Use of Electronic Transmission Capabilities continue to be updated as technology use requires.

**Policy Scope:** The intent of the policy is to ensure that all uses of the connection are consistent with the goals and educational philosophy of the school system. The procedure specifically outlines responsibilities in the following areas:

- Network Etiquette
- Email
- Passwords
- Copyright
- Security
- Plagiarism
- Vandalism
- Network Resources
- Unauthorized Charges
- Warranties
- Emerging Technologies

The AUP states:

*"Technology Services is responsible for establishing **and users are required to follow all standards, policies, and procedures related to the use of technology in Guilford County Schools.**"*

*"The user is responsible for his or her actions and activities involving the network. Some examples of unacceptable users are: circumventing safety configurations, modifying setup policies, modifying settings on machines, attaching unauthorized devices..."*

Incidents and violations of the AUP policy by employees are referred to the Human Resources Division for review.

The Technology Policies, Procedures and Standards Manual was written to provide policies for using all technology resources in a responsible, legal and ethical manner. The procedures and standards outlined in the document were developed by the Technology Applications Review Committee (TARC). The TARC reviews the acquisition and implementation of any hardware or software application. The goal of the committee is to provide a standard and controllable

network environment for the district.

Examples of issues addressed in the manual include:

- Minimum standards for networked computers
- Relocation of equipment
- Computer donations
- Personally-owned software
- Email accounts for non-employees
- Password resets
- Use of email
- Approved software lists

**Requests for Services:** Requests for technology services that are listed in this document may be submitted to Technology Services through the school or department's Technology contact person and the web-based Help Desk Ticket System. Any application not included in this document requires review and approval of the TARC. The complete Technology Policies, Procedures and Standards Manual and the Staff Laptop Guidelines can be downloaded by selecting the following link: [Technology Policies, Procedures and Standards Manual](#).

## Weapons on Campus or Other Educational Property

The following definitions apply to this section:

1. **Educational property:** Any school building or bus, school campus, grounds, recreational area, athletic field or other property owned, used, or operated by any board of education or school board of trustees, or directors for the administration of any school.
2. **Employee:** A person employed by a local board of education or school whether the person is an adult or a minor.
3. **School:** A public or private school, community college, college, or university.
4. **Student:** A person enrolled in a school or a person who has been suspended or expelled within the last five years from a school, whether the person is an adult or a minor.
5. **Switchblade knife:** A knife containing a blade that opens automatically by the release of a spring or a similar contrivance.
6. **Weapon:** Any device enumerated below:
  - a. It shall be a Class I felony for any person to possess or carry, whether openly or concealed, any gun, rifle, pistol, or other firearm of any kind on educational property or to a curricular or extracurricular activity sponsored by a school. Unless the conduct is covered under some other provision of law providing greater punishment, any person who willfully discharges a firearm of any kind on educational property is guilty of a Class F felony. However, this subsection does not apply to a BB gun, stun gun, air rifle, or air pistol.
  - b. It shall be a Class G felony for any person to possess or carry, whether openly or concealed, any dynamite cartridge, bomb, grenade, mine, or powerful explosive as defined in G.S. 14-284.1, on educational property or to a curricular or

extracurricular activity sponsored by a school. This subsection shall not apply to fireworks.

- c. It shall be a Class 1 misdemeanor for any person to possess or carry, whether openly or concealed, any BB gun, stun gun, air rifle, air pistol, bowie knife, dirk, dagger, slingshot, leaded cane, switchblade knife, blackjack, metallic knuckles, razors and razor blades (except solely for personal shaving), firework, or any sharp pointed or edged instrument except instructional supplies, unaltered nail files and clips and tools used solely for preparation of food, instruction, and maintenance, on educational property.

(Reference: G.S. 14-209.2)

## Recruitment and Incentives

## Cooperating Teachers | Supervision of Student Teachers

Licensed teachers who have achieved career status with GCS are eligible to serve as cooperating teachers in Guilford County Schools Student Teacher Program. Eligible employees must also have the endorsement of the appropriate principal. No student teacher will be placed without this endorsement. Student teachers must abide by the district's calendars and by all schedules and policies of the schools to which they are assigned. Any financial compensation for cooperating teachers is the sole responsibility of the college or university. Principals are notified in writing of student teacher placements and will notify cooperating teachers of approved placements.

### Mission Possible

Mission Possible is a Performance Based Compensation System designed to recruit and retain highly effective teachers in our hardest to staff schools. Both recruitment and performance monetary incentives are available to staff and faculty who work in a Mission Possible School. Performance and achievement data for Mission Possible schools are maintained by the Mission Possible Department, which is responsible for protecting the confidentiality, integrity and availability of information. The information is password secure and access is strictly limited. For a list of schools and incentives, please visit the Web site at: [Mission Possible](#).

### Recruitment and Selection of Licensed Employees

It is the policy of the Guilford County Board of Education that a continuous system of recruitment and selection of personnel be maintained in order to assure competent candidates for vacancies as needed.

It is also the policy of the board to provide all applicants for employment with equal employment opportunities and to provide current employees with training, compensation, promotion and other benefits of employment without regard to an individual's real or perceived race, color, sex, religion, creed, political belief, age, national origin, linguistic and language differences, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, socioeconomic status, height, weight, physical characteristics, marital status, parental status, or disability except where exemption is appropriate and allowed by law.

#### **Recruitment**

Every effort will be made to hire the most qualified candidates for each position. Guilford County School will actively seek candidates from local colleges and universities as well as regional and national candidates. Additionally, the District recruits candidates through non-traditional routes, such as Lateral Entry and various alternative licensure programs. Where the Chief Human Resources Officer determines that position scarcity exists, candidates may be sought from international sources. The board is also committed to diversity throughout the programs and practices of the school district. To further this goal, the recruitment and employment program should be designed to encourage a diverse pool of qualified applicants.

The board will continue its practice of actively recruiting, employing and promoting qualified members of groups formerly underutilized.

All candidates will be evaluated on their merits and qualifications for positions. All vacancies will be publicized within the school district so that employees may learn of promotional opportunities. Staff members interested in any vacancy should state their interest in writing and forward it to the human resources office in accordance with the vacancy notice. All staff members are encouraged to inform their supervisors of any qualified individual they feel would be an asset to the district. Vacancies will be publicized externally, as appropriate, to attract qualified applicants.

### **Selection**

Candidates for employment will be selected based on their assessed ability to fulfill duties identified in the job description as well as performance standards established by the Board. Each candidate, prior to being submitted to the Board of Education for hiring or assignment to a permanent position shall undergo a thorough reference check, a criminal record check and all other processes required by the Superintendent in an effort to assure that only the most qualified individuals will be hired by Guilford County Schools.

**Licensure Information**

# Induction and Professional Support

Guilford County Schools New Teacher Induction Program focuses on building the capacity of its beginning teachers to promote high achievement among students. It provides a comprehensive induction program, called Right Start, to ensure that new professionals have the support they need to become the best teachers possible.

## Right Start

Right Start encompasses an orientation, professional development seminars, and ongoing support at the beginning teachers' schools. Right Start Orientation consists of pre-service workshops that provide an introduction to Guilford County Schools, including curriculum, policies and procedures, professional development, the North Carolina Teaching Standards, and North Carolina evaluation process. Orientation is followed by ongoing professional development in which timely topics are presented and discussed. Additionally, beginning teachers receive continuous support at their schools by an Induction Coach, an Lead Mentor, and an assigned mentor. Right Start is administered by the Organization Development Division.

## Beginning Teacher Support Program

The Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP), mandated by State Board of Education policy TCP-A-004, effective January 1, 1985, and amended in 2010, is a three-year program that extends professional education preparation and offers the support necessary for an individual's professional growth.

**Required Participation:** Teachers who did not receive a continuing license prior to January 1, 1998, and have less than three years of appropriate service (normally considered to be public school service) in their areas of initial licensures are required to participate in the Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP).

**Out-of-State Applicants:** Out-of-state applicants are not subject to BTSP requirements if their North Carolina Licensures are based on reciprocity or completion of a National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), approved education program, and if they have three or more years of appropriate experience. Not all states have NC reciprocity, and not all out-of-state colleges and universities are NCATE approved. Out-of-state applicants with less than three years experience must participate in BTSP.

**Individuals Renewing Licenses:** Individuals who renew expired licenses do not have to participate in BTSP if they have three or more years of appropriate experience at the time of license renewal. Without this experience, they are subject to BTSP requirements.

**Mentor Support:** Year I, Year II, and Year III beginning teachers (BT) in Guilford County Schools are assigned a Mentor/Support Team, consisting of the principal/supervisor (or designee) and a trained mentor, usually from their same subject area or grade level. A minimum of six consecutive months of participation is required per school year for the "year" to count toward fulfillment of the BTSP requirement.

**Continuous Professional Growth Requirement:** All initially licensed teachers are required by the state to show continuous professional growth as determined by each individual school district. Guilford County Schools requires that beginning teachers document their continuous professional growth on their professional development transcript logs. Workshops and courses must be approved through the Professional Development Website and must be taken within the fiscal year of July 1 to June 30.

Completion of BT requirements in one teaching area satisfies the BT requirements for all other teaching areas. Once continuing licensure has been earned in one teaching area, additional teaching areas do not require a BT experience. An initially-licensed teacher who is assigned to subject areas in which he holds a provisional license may not earn a continuing license until the specific license provisions have been satisfied. Initial licensure becomes void after three years of unsuccessful experience and is not extended. The individual can return to an approved education program to correct deficiencies and earn a new initial license that allows another opportunity to meet the performance requirements. Initially-licensed teachers who need additional assistance other than that provided by assigned mentors should contact the Office of Induction and Success at 665-8000.

**Year I, Year II, and Year III beginning teachers** will focus on teaching, working with a mentor, preparing Professional Development Plans(PDP), learning about the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards, developing their skills as a reflective practitioner, and complying with all requirements of the State of North Carolina and Guilford County Schools

**Continuing Professional Licensure** (Standard Professional II License) will be granted when the BT has successfully completed the required professional growth as prescribed by the LEA, licensure requirements, and three years of teaching, and when the designated local official has notified DPI that there is no knowledge related to the character or conduct of the BT to deny licensure to teach in North Carolina.

# License Guidelines

## Requirements

State law requires that all employees in licensed positions hold appropriate licensure for their subject(s), grade level(s) or professional assignment(s). "Appropriate" may mean a regular five-year license or a provisional license or endorsement valid only for the school year specified. The maintenance of a valid license in the area of assignment is the responsibility of the employee. Personnel who hold licenses that expire during a particular year must furnish documentation to the Staffing Office of completion of the required renewal credits, Praxis test scores, semester hours of coursework, etc.

## Disclosure of Criminal Convictions

Effective with five-year licenses expiring June 30, 1994, the holder of the expiring license must provide information on whether he/she has been convicted of a felony or crime other than a minor traffic offense since the first N.C. license was issued. The state-mandated form providing this information must be completed and on file for the license extension to be valid.

## Renewal Credit (Requirements)

Recent state legislation has changed the number of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) required for Standard Professional II licensure to 8.0 for licensed employees who have a license expiration date of June 1, 2015 or later. The following is a breakdown of the required 8.0 renewal credits:

### For Standard Professional II License Holders

**K-8 Teachers\*:** 8.0 Total

3.0 Literacy

3.0 Academic Subject Area

2.0 General

**All other educators:** 8.0 Total

3.0 Academic Subject Area

5.0 General

(\*Includes employees in the following areas: Teachers of students in grades K through 8, Art, Music, PE, Exceptional Children's Teachers, English as a Second Language, Advanced Learner Teachers, etc.)

For detailed information, refer to policy **TCP-A-005** at this link: <http://sbepolicy.dpi.state.nc.us/>

## Earning Credit

Credit may be earned for attending locally sponsored workshops, college and university courses, activities offered by various outside organizations and locally approved "independent study"

activities. **Prior approval is required** to earn renewal credit for **all** activities which are offered by any entity other than Guilford County Schools, including colleges, State Department of Public Instruction, universities, technical schools and community colleges. "Prior approval" means that an employee desiring renewal credit for a particular activity must request approval **before** the beginning date of the activity.

## Retention and Non-renewal of Non-tenured, Licensed Employees

The Board acknowledges that the most important aspect of attaining excellence in education is the quality of the teaching staff and the administrative staff. The Board therefore adopts as policy and states its determination to strive for such excellence, and further declares its intent to employ and reemploy only those teachers and administrators who possess, have exhibited, and continue to strive for excellence in their preparation for, performance of, and contribution toward the educational process. Achievement of a proficient rating on the North Carolina Teacher and Administrator summative evaluation is the expected standard of performance for teachers and administrators in this school system. However, proficient performance shall not constitute any assurance to any teacher or administrator of rights to or consideration for employment or reemployment. The Board of Education holds all personnel accountable for striving for a summative rating of distinguished on all performance.

Appraisals of preparation for, performance of, and contribution toward the educational process and the needs of the school system shall be considered by the Board in making decisions to employ and reemploy teachers and administrators.

### **Basis for Nonrenewal**

The Board seeks to employ and maintain professionals who are performing at the highest levels of competence. The Board, upon the Superintendent's recommendation, may refuse to renew the contract of any non-tenured teacher for any cause it deems sufficient; provided, however, that the cause may not be arbitrary, capricious, discriminatory, or for personal or political reasons, or because the teacher engaged in activities that are protected by the United States Constitution or the North Carolina Constitution. For more information, please refer to § 115C-325.

### **Notice of Nonrenewal**

The Superintendent shall notify teachers of any recommendation not to renew teachers' employment in accordance with State statute. (Reference: G.S. 115C-325)

**Employment,  
Compensation and  
Evaluation**

## Assignment and Transfer | Classified

The reassignment and transfer of classified personnel may be necessary under certain conditions. Transfers may be self-initiated (at the request of the employee) or administration-initiated (employer directed based on administrative determination). The salary impact of the transfer of a classified employee will depend on whether the move is a promotion, a demotion or lateral transfer.

Approved, self-initiated transfers for classified employees may occur at any time during the year. Employees are not required to submit any documentation to the Human Resources Office in order to transfer and may make direct contact with principals or other administrators regarding openings. The actual date of transfer must be agreed to by both the losing and gaining administrators, but the date should not exceed 60 days after the transfer has been approved by the Chief Human Resources Officer or designee. If the transfer is a promotion, then the move must take place within fourteen (14) calendar days.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GCM)

## Assignment and Transfer | Licensed

The reassignment and transfer of licensed personnel may be necessary under certain conditions. Transfers may be self-initiated (at the request of the employee) or administration-initiated (employer directed based on administrative determination). As a rule, self-initiated transfers of licensed employees should not occur during the school year, except under limited conditions as outlined in Board of Education Policy GBM. This policy addresses information related to the criteria, exemptions, and notice for transfer.

- The employee transfer period will be established by Human Resources based upon the date when position allocations are confirmed and staffing projections have been finalized for the upcoming school year. An employee who desires a transfer shall complete the appropriate online application provided by the Human Resources Department which includes personal data (name, etc.), the employee's present job assignment and location, the employee's qualifications, the preferred job assignment and location, and other information as required.
- Known vacant positions for the upcoming school year will be posted first for internal employee consideration during the transfer period.
- Transfers for the upcoming school year will occur during the transfer period established by Human Resources. Once established, the transfer period will be published for all licensed personnel. This period will end no later than May 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Principals/Supervisors should access the *Licensed Employee Transfer **only pool of*** interested internal candidates through the GCS online application. Principals/supervisors should interview at least one transfer applicant (if available) for each vacancy.
- An eligible employee may seek a transfer even if his/her name does not appear in the transfer pool. If a principal plans to nominate a transfer candidate, he/she should immediately notify the sending principal/ supervisor of that decision.

- To ensure school stability, no school shall lose more than 10% of its current licensed staff in one year due to self-initiated transfers without the consent of the Superintendent or Chief Human Resources Officer.
- In the case of unusual or extenuating circumstances related to timelines or other requirements, the employee can provide a written explanation of those circumstances to the Chief Human Resources Officer. The Chief Human Resources Officer will exercise appropriate discretion.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GBM-P)

## Classified Employment

Classified personnel are issued letters of appointment upon employment with Guilford County Schools. Appointment letters for classified employees include:

1. **Continuing letters of appointment:** issued to full-time and part-time classified employees in continuing positions.
2. **Interim letters of appointment:** issued to classified employees who fill positions that (1) are temporarily vacant, (2) work with a single student (interpreters only), (3) are specially funded for a specific period of time. All classified employees are considered "at will" employees. "At will" provides that the employee can be legally dismissed from employment at the discretion of the school district.

## Employment of Substitutes

Only those persons whose names appear on Guilford County Schools' Approved Substitute List may be employed in a substitute capacity.

Teacher and Teacher Assistant substitutes must have 48 semester hours of coursework or an Associate Degree with a cumulative GPA of 2.0 to qualify as a substitute. Approved substitutes can be employed only in the categories for which they have been approved. For example, a person approved to substitute for a teacher assistant cannot substitute for a teacher without additional approval as a substitute teacher. Current non-exempt employees who are also approved to substitute may not exceed the 40-hour work week provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

**Licensed:** Substitutes are required for licensed personnel absences for positions that deliver direct instructional services to students. The principal must request a substitute in writing to the Chief Human Resources Officer (c/o the Director of Staffing Operations) in order to employ substitutes for school counselors and media specialists. Teacher Assistants may be employed as substitutes in accordance with specified procedures.

(Reference: Administrative Procedure GBRJA-P; North Carolina Public Schools Financial Procedures Manual)

**Classified:** Substitutes for all classified personnel may be employed on the recommendation of the principal/supervisor and with the approval of the Chief Human Resources Officer (c/o the Director of Staffing Operations) or through approved procedures to cover absences for a specified period of time.  
(Reference: Administrative Procedure GBRJB-P)

Contact the Substitute Office at 378-8820 or 370-8382, for additional information.

## Evaluation | Classified Personnel

The Guilford County Board of Education places a high priority on both engaging the most competent personnel available and on assisting them to develop throughout their term of employment. Classified employees, who are at-will employees, should be evaluated at minimum once each fiscal year. However, if any employee receives ratings that are all at or above "satisfactory" levels, the formal evaluation may take place every two years as long as the employee's service continues to meet "satisfactory" levels. The supervisor must document the satisfactory performance during alternate years by completing the "Certification of Classified Employee Performance" form. Additional appraisals may be conducted at any time deemed necessary by the evaluator. The evaluator and the employee must sign to indicate that the employee has read the completed evaluation form.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GCI)

## Evaluation | Licensed Personnel

The Guilford County Board of Education places a high priority on securing the most competent personnel available and, once they are employed, in assisting them in their professional growth and development throughout their careers. The evaluation is a timely process in which assessments are made about an employee's work. The performance evaluation is a continuing process for the purpose of identifying strengths and areas for growth of the individual and improving the quality of work. Specific procedures that comply with North Carolina laws and State Board of Education regulations regarding the evaluation of licensed personnel may be found in Board of Education Policy GBI.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GBI; Board of Education Policy GBDB; G. S. 115C-333)

## Exit Interviews

It is not a requirement that personnel ending employment with Guilford County Schools participate in a formal exit interview with Human Resources Department staff. Any employee requesting an exit interview to provide feedback to the school district will be granted one, just as the district

reserves the right to request the interview of selected personnel upon separation from employment.

Employees desiring an exit interview should contact their Staffing Specialist at (336)378-8806. Resignation forms are available on the Guilford County Schools Web site, from the supervisor and from the Human Resources Department.

## Job-sharing for School Employees

Should the Board of Education wish to employ job-sharing staff, it must designate one or more positions as job-sharing positions.

### Eligibility

An employee in a job-sharing position is a person who:

1. is employed by a local board of education less than-full- time, and
2. is sharing a position with one other employee of the same job classification.

Job-sharing provisions apply to both certified personnel and non-certified personnel.

### Reemployed Retirees in Job-Sharing Positions

Because the benefits for staff employed in job-sharing positions include retirement, retirees can only be employed in temporary job-sharing positions. Retirees employed in temporary job-sharing positions do not earn leave benefits.

### Salary

An employee in a job-sharing position will be paid pro-rata based on the salary schedule for the position. Experience for certified personnel will be credited at the rate prescribed in the Licensure Policy. For non-certified employees, experience credited for salary purposes will follow local policy. **Note:** The legislation states, "Service rendered by a school employee in a job-sharing position will be credited at the rate of one-half year for each regular school year of employment."

### Benefits

An employee in a permanent job-sharing position who works at least 20 hours per week will receive paid legal holidays, annual vacation leave, sick leave and personal leave on a pro-rata basis. The employee also receives service credit under the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System as provided in G.S.135-4(b) and insurance benefits as provided in G.S. 135-40.2. Retirement is earned at a rate of one-half year of retirement credit for each regular school year of employment. Participation in the State Health Plan is an optional benefit. If the employee elects to participate in the State Health Plan, the employing school unit pays a percentage of the Plan's total non-contributory premiums and the employee pays the balance. (Reference(s): G.S. 115C-302. 1; G.S. 115C-316; G.S. 135-4(b); G.S. 153-40.2; NCGA 2003, S.B. 701 and NC Benefits and Employment Policy Manual)

# Licensed Employment | Teachers and Other Licensed Employees

Eligible instructional licensed personnel are issued contracts upon employment with Guilford County Schools. Changes to teacher contracts are being considered by the state legislature. Information is based on current North Carolina legislation. Approved changes will be communicated with licensed employees as soon as it becomes available.

## One-year Contracts

New licensed instructional employees who hold a clear Standard Professional I or II North Carolina Professional Educator's license are eligible for a one-year contract.

## Career Contracts

Licensed employees who earned Career status in Guilford County Schools prior to June 2013 will maintain the status until 2018 according to current legislation.

## Interim Contracts

Interim contracts are issued to licensed personnel who fill positions that are:

1. temporarily vacant;
2. short-term for a specific period of time, not to exceed one school year; or
3. less than full-time, not to exceed one school year.

Interim contracts are also given to licensed employees who do not hold a valid and clear North Carolina license in at least one area (e.g. lateral entry and provisionally licensed employees).

## Administrative Contracts

Principals and Assistant Principals will be issued initial two-year contracts and are eligible for an extension of the two-year contract for four (4) years according to the provisions of G.S. 115C-287.1

***Important:** If any licensed employee believes that he/she has not been issued the correct contract, it is the employee's responsibility to advise the Director of Employment/Staffing, so that any discrepancy can be reviewed and appropriately resolved.*

(Reference: G.S. 115C-325 and G.S. 115C-287.1)

# Performance Growth Plans

## Licensed Employees

A Performance Growth Plan or Action Plan refers to any written strategy designed to help an employee improve or gain greater competence. This includes Monitored and Directed Growth Plans. North Carolina General Statute 115C-333 and Board of Education Policy GBIA require a Performance Growth Plan for any licensed employee who receives a rating of below standard,

unsatisfactory, developing or not demonstrated on any function of the employee's performance evaluation, unless the Superintendent recommends dismissal, demotion or non-renewal of the employee. Under state law, teachers are required to enter into the Superintendent's plan for professional development.

**Limitations on Appeal:** A Performance Growth Plan or action plan cannot be appealed for the following reasons:

1. The placement on a Plan of a licensed employee who receives a rating of below standard, unsatisfactory, developing, or not demonstrated since this is required by statute.
2. The ratings received on an evaluation result in the placement of an employee on a Growth Plan.
3. The fact that an administrator does not meet every requirement set forth in a Growth Plan provided that there has been substantial compliance.

(Reference: G.S. 115C-307 (e); G.S. 115C-333; Board of Education Policy GBIA)

An individual Growth Plan will be developed and reviewed at least annually. Beginning teachers must be rated "Proficient" on all North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards on the most recent Teacher Summary Rating Form in order to be eligible for the Standard Professional 2 License. (Reference: North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process)

### **Classified Employees**

**Performance Plan:** Any classified employee who receives an overall performance rating below "satisfactory" level on his/her performance evaluation must participate in a performance improvement plan designed to improve the employee's performance in the deficient area(s).

**Appeal:** Any performance improvement plan may be appealed to the immediate supervisor, her/his supervisor and ultimately Human Resources.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GCI)

## **Onboarding**

Guilford county Schools has a formal process for welcoming and transitioning new employees to the district. The goal of the onboarding program is to successfully integrate new employees into the work environment by familiarizing them with the district's culture and to acquaint them with the information and resources they need for a successful transition.

The effectiveness of onboarding when new employees join GCS determines whether they become engaged and productive quickly and potentially how long they remain member of the GCS team. With our onboarding process, we have essentially expanded the concept of new employee orientation to include a formal and structured experience so that employees have access to the information and resources they need for a positive and effective start and remain productive and engaged.

During the onboarding process, new employees are introduced to their jobs, coworkers, and the organization so they have the resources necessary to successfully contribute and meet the desired outcomes. It includes information about the district's mission, vision and core values as well as expectations, policies, procedures, compensation and benefits and other important aspect of GCS. The process is standardized so that all new employees are given the same information with respect to company policies, procedures, and expectations, which ensures consistency and accuracy.

The GCS onboarding process is defined by:

- helping employees acquire the necessary knowledge and skills and to become effective contributors to the district;
- teaching and coaching new employees on how to fulfill the requirements of their positions; how to be successful in their roles in the district;
- time to connect new hires with other employees, with resources, with support so that they ultimately contribute to student growth; and
- teaching new hires the cultural norms of the district; how to behave and how to access resources.

The GCS onboarding process has four phases:

1. **Pre-Game:** online orientation; complete paperwork, review policies and procedures; can be done anywhere new hires has access to internet
2. **Huddle:** cultural immersion; face-to-face meeting; introduce new hires to the district
3. **Home Game:** site-specific orientation; learn role, duties, processes; make connections, build relationships that support high level engagement; prepare new hire to make significant contributions
4. **Post-Game:** "Monday morning Quarterbacking"; review of first 90 days; assess how well we acclimated new hire into district and department; ensure new hires have tools and are prepared to be successful

New hires are encouraged to engage and make a difference for the students we serve!

## Personnel Files

The Superintendent shall maintain a personnel file for each employee that contains any complaint, commendation, or suggestion for correction or improvement about the employee's professional conduct, except that the Superintendent may elect not to place in a teacher's file (i) a letter of complaint that contains invalid, irrelevant, outdated, or false information or (ii) a letter of complaint when there is no documentation of an attempt to resolve the issue. The complaint, commendation or suggestion must be signed by the initiating person and will be placed in the employee's file only after five days' notice to the employee. Any denial or explanation relating to the complaint, commendation or suggestion by employee will be placed in the file.

## Removal of Information

Any employee may petition the Guilford County Schools Board of Education to remove any information from his/her personnel file that he/she deems invalid, irrelevant or outdated. The Board may order the Superintendent to remove that information if it finds the information is invalid, irrelevant or outdated. Requests regarding personnel files should be directed to the Human Resources Department at the Eugene Street Administration Office.

## File Review

Any employee wishing to review his/her personnel file should call the Human Resources Office to schedule an appointment; **walk-ins cannot be accommodated**. Every employee may have access to his/her own personnel file (with the exception of pre-employment data) during working hours, provided reasonable notice is given to the Human Resources Office.

(Reference: G. S. 115C-307(e); 115C-325 (b); 115C-319, 320 and 321; Board of Education Policy GAK; Administrative Procedure GAK-P)

## Re-employed or Volunteer Retired Employees

Employees who have retired from the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System may be considered for re-hire to a part-time position or a temporary (less than six months) full-time position.

## Retiree Volunteers

"Retirement" means the termination of employment and the complete separation from active service after a specified period of time with no intent or agreement, express or implied, to return to service. In order for a member's retirement to become effective in any month, the member must render no service, including part-time, temporary, substitute, or contractor service, at any time during the six months immediately following the effective date of retirement. For purposes of this, service as a member of a school board or as an unpaid bona fide volunteer in a local school administrative unit shall not be considered service."

## Employment of Retirees Subject to the Earnings Cap

Retirees employed under this section must meet certain conditions:

1. The individual must have ended employment with the school system in good standing.
2. Retirees must have been retired at least six months.
3. It is the responsibility of the retiree to contact the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System to determine the earnings cap and monitor their earnings upon re-employment to ensure they do not exceed the earnings cap.
4. Appointment will be made on an interim basis for no more than one year at a time.
5. The hiring administrator must provide a written justification to support the recommendation to hire.

## Salary

Retirees will be paid according to salary schedules established for the position.

## Benefits | Cap on Hours Worked to Preserve Retiree Medical Coverage

Retirees working full-time will not earn benefits unless they cancel their retirement benefits. If a retiree returns in a substitute capacity or interim capacity averaging 30 or more hours for more than six consecutive months, or averages 30 or more hours per month over twelve months will be removed from the retiree medical plan and may be required to seek alternative coverage with the district or other third party. It is the retiree's responsibility to manage the average hours cap to preserve his/her retiree medical benefits.

Retirees working 20 hours per week but less than 30 hours earn pro-rated part-time benefits (e.g. leave ) from the school system and continue to receive retirement benefits.

## Resignation | Classified Employees

A classified employee is required to submit a written resignation notice at least **fourteen (14) calendar days** prior to the effective date. Failure to provide sufficient notice will be made part of the employment record, does not reflect positively, and may harm future reemployment possibilities.

With proper notice, employees who resign during the school year are generally not reemployed within the next 12 months. An employee resigning during the summer months must provide a notice of at least fourteen (14) days prior to start date for employees for the next school year. Once a resignation is accepted by the Superintendent or his/her designee, it may not be withdrawn by the employee.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GCO)

## Resignation | Licensed Employees

The Superintendent or his/her designee is authorized to accept resignations from employees on behalf of the Board. Once a resignation is accepted by the Superintendent, it may not be withdrawn by the employee. When it becomes necessary for a licensed employee to cancel his/her contract or terminate employment, a written resignation notice should be received at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the effective date in accordance with General Statute 115C-325(0). In addition to jeopardizing future reemployment possibilities, failure to provide a timely notice may constitute grounds for license revocation.

An employee resigning during the summer months must provide a notice of at least thirty (30) days prior to start date for employees for the next school year.

(Reference: Board of Education Policy GBO)

# Resignation and Leave Balances

Following a resignation, the distribution of leave balances is as follows:

1. When an employee resigns and is immediately rehired in another North Carolina school system, sick leave, annual leave, bonus leave and personal leave balances must be transferred to the hiring school system. The resigning employee must contact the Payroll Department (370-8367) and request the transfer of leave balances.
2. When an employee resigns and is not immediately rehired in another North Carolina school system, the sick leave and personal leave are kept in a “bank” for 60-63 months (based on the employees’ months of service) and payment is made for annual leave days. Reinstatement of sick and personal days must follow the provisions of G.S.115c-336.
3. With the exception of immediate rehire in another North Carolina school system, payment is made to the employee for annual leave days and bonus leave days.

(Reference: Public Schools of North Carolina Benefits and Employment Policy Manual; G.S. 115C-336 sections 3, 4 and 5)

## Salary Administration

### Pay Plan Administration

In addition to the State Teacher's Salary Schedule, there are locally adopted salary schedules for positions employed by the Board of Education. Guilford County Schools’ Pay Plan recognizes experience as the basis for pay increases within the established pay range. Guidelines and procedures on salary progression are available for review at school/department offices, at the Staffing Operations Office and on the Web site at [Salary Schedules](#).

### Hiring Rate/Starting Salary/Salary Adjustments

**Teacher and/or State Salary Schedules:** Teachers and other staff paid on the teacher and/or state salary schedules are placed on the schedule and step-certified by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction based on years of experience and degree(s) held. The district provides a local supplement to these salaries.

### District Level Licensed Salary Schedules

Employees assigned to these schedules are paid in accordance with the degree and experience level on their North Carolina educator license. Each schedule indicates rates for Bachelor’s degree level and Master’s degree level. Employees with a relevant Six-Year/Advanced degree or Doctorate degree are eligible for an additional \$126/month or \$253/month, respectively. Each schedule indicates rates for experience of 0 through 36 + years.

All district level positions requiring an educator license are assigned to one of these schedules.

**Master Salary Schedule:** New employees assigned to the Master Salary Schedule who sufficiently verify previous work experience may receive credit for experience in accordance with provisions for experience criteria.

**Bus Driver Salary Schedule:** New employees assigned to the Bus Driver Salary Schedule who sufficiently verify previous work experience may receive credit up to the maximum of the Bus Drivers' Salary Schedule in accordance with the provisions for experience criteria.

**Salary Corrections:** Employees are encouraged to monitor their pay vouchers to assure proper placement on the appropriate salary schedule. Errors in salary placement (underpayments and overpayments) will be corrected upon discovery. Salary adjustments will be effective retroactively, to the date the error occurred. However, under no circumstances will a retroactive salary adjustment be made for more than twelve (12) months prior to discovery. All adjustments will be made effective on the first day of the appropriate pay period.

### **Progression through the Salary Range**

In accordance with State law and regulations, for licensed personnel assigned to a state salary schedule and provided a local supplement (e.g. teachers), experience step-increments are granted annually, unless frozen by legislative action. Generally, other staff on the Master Salary Schedule or Bus Driver Salary Schedule will advance one step on the assigned salary grade for completion of each year of satisfactory service until he/she reaches the maximum of the salary range. Experience step advancement does not necessarily result in an increase in pay.

### **Pay for Part-time Work**

Compensation of any employee appointed for less than full-time service will be computed on a pro-rated basis for hours worked. Part-time employees are covered by Workers' Compensation and Social Security and receive fringe benefits as determined by the Board of Education and state law.

### **Co-Curricular Supplements**

Exempt employees and community volunteers (non-faculty) may receive a nominal fee for performing co-curricular activities such as coaching or activity sponsorship at the discretion of the principal. With the receipt of a nominal fee, a separate agreement must be completed for each activity. For more information, please refer to the co-curricular guidelines on the GCS website.

### **Longevity**

Principals, assistant principals and classified, regular full-time and part-time employees (20 hours or more a week) are eligible for yearly longevity payments after completing 10 years of State of North Carolina service. **As of the 2014-15 school year, teachers and instructional support no longer earn longevity benefits. The NC General Assembly incorporated these funds in to the salary schedules to provide higher salaries at each step.**

Longevity payment is made the last working day of the employee's anniversary month. The payment is calculated according to a scale based upon annual state salary and years of qualifying service:

<u>Years Completed</u>	<u>Longevity Percentage</u>
10 but less than 15	1.50%
15 but less than 20	2.25%
20 but less than 25	3.25%
25 or more years	4.50%

**Establishing Longevity:** Upon hire, an employee’s longevity date is established with the district based on verifiable, qualifying state service. New employees must complete the State of North Carolina Service-Employee’s Record (Form 103) provided during New Employee Orientation. Employees with qualifying state service must send the NC State Service Transfer Form to their last employer for completion.

**Longevity Corrections:** Errors in longevity dates resulting in underpayments or overpayments will be corrected upon discovery. Adjustments will be effective retroactively, to the date the error occurred. However, under no circumstances will a retroactive adjustment be made for more than twelve (12) months prior to discovery.

Questions regarding Longevity should be directed to the appropriate Staffing Specialist for the employee’s location.

## **Paydays**

**Pay Schedule:** Employees are paid either monthly on the 15th of the month or the last day of the month, or semi-monthly on the 15th and last day of the month. Each paycheck includes earnings for all work performed through the end of the previous payroll period. **Contact the Payroll Department at 370-8370 for additional information on pay dates.** In the event that a regularly scheduled payday falls on a weekend or bank holiday, employees’ bank accounts will be credited on the revised pay date.

## **Direct Deposit**

**Direct Deposit Required:** All employees including substitutes are required to enroll in the Direct Deposit Program or the Payroll Card Program administered by Wells Fargo. An employee must complete either the Direct Deposit Authorization Agreement for Automatic Deposits (Form FIN–F002) or the. After the Direct Deposit Authorization Agreement or the Payroll Card Enrollment Form is received and processed, a test transaction is made from Guilford County Schools’ account and the employee's bank account; as a result, it may take six to eight weeks before deposits can be made directly to the employee's account.

**View Paycheck Information:** Employees may view their paycheck information (paystubs) online, by visiting [Employee Self-service](#). Any questions or requests for the Direct Deposit Authorization Agreement should be directed to the Payroll Office at 370-8367.

## **Payroll Deductions**

Federal and State income taxes, Social Security tax and retirement contributions, tax liens, etc. will be payroll-deducted as required by law and the Board of Education. No other payroll deductions

from an employee's pay for contributions to charitable or other organizations will be made without the request of the employee, prior approval and in accordance with locally established procedures.

### **Income Tax Withholding Forms**

Federal (form W-4) and state (form NC-4) forms may be obtained from Payroll Office, Benefits Department or the Guilford County Schools Web site for the purpose of changing income tax withholding information. Changes in exemptions and deductions may be made at any time during the year.

### **State Employees' Credit Union Summer Cash Account**

Ten- and 11-month employees may choose to enroll in the State Employees' Credit Union Summer (SECU) Cash Account as a structured method to save for summer "reserves". The Summer Cash Account is available to all SECU members who work fewer than 12 months per school year. During the working months, payroll deductions are made from the employees' checks and forwarded to SECU and deposited in their Summer Cash Accounts. Funds from the Summer Cash Account (including the interest that is earned on the savings) will be automatically transferred into the requested SECU checking or share accounts during the non-working month(s). Additional information and questions regarding the SECU Summer Cash Account should be directed to any of the SECU branches.

### **Unemployment**

Effective December 1, 2012 it became a Class A felony to improperly obtain more than \$400 in unemployment benefits. It is a requirement that the claimant seeking unemployment compensation:

1. provide information about job searches; and
2. indicate if he/she has been employed during the week.

Claimants must indicate that they acknowledge that they "may be prosecuted in a court of law for giving false statements and/or for withholding information."

Generally, 10-month employees by statute are **not considered unemployed during the summer months or when school is not in session. Also, short-term substitutes are not generally eligible for unemployment compensation when there is no work available.** The Division of Employment Security determines unemployment eligibility and it is the claimants' responsibility to ensure that he/she provides truthful and accurate information during the application process. It is advisable to contact the Division of Employment Security for information regarding rights and responsibilities.

## **Employee Benefits**

## Benefits Administration

The Benefits Department provides support to all GCS employees and their covered dependents—17,000 strong. Its goal is to give courteous and timely care to every employee situation. Employees are encouraged to use self-service options when possible. To help us serve you better, we request appointments for the following:

- Leave Planning
- Workers' Compensation
- Disability Planning
- Benefits Enrollment Assistance
- Life Insurance Claims
- ADA Accommodation Requests

## Employee Discounts - GCS 4 Le\$\$

Businesses throughout Greensboro and the surrounding counties are showing their appreciation and support by offering GCS employee discounts. Enjoy great perks at retail stores, parks, and apartments, sporting events and other venues by regularly checking GCS 4 Le\$\$, formerly Employee Express.

## Employment/Salary Verifications

The Benefits Department also assists employees needing salary and employment verifications. Salary verifications (for loans, mortgages, social services, etc.) generally require a **48-hour turnaround** for active and recently-separated employees.

For employment verifications requiring documentation of job history, employees should allow **5-10 business days for processing**.

## Enrollment in Benefits

### Enrollment Deadline

Employees are required to complete the enrollment process to elect their benefits. Failure to enroll within 30 days of the hire date may subject an employee to a 12-month waiting period for pre-existing conditions under the some insurance options.

### Benefits Information

All new hire benefits enrollment is completed online. The Benefits Department is available to help employees needing special assistance and employees changing benefits elections due to a change in benefits eligibility.

# Changes in Employee Status and Qualifying Events

## Benefit Election Status Changes

Certain benefit changes for pre-tax health or dental insurance and flexible benefits (vision and cancer) are regulated by federal and state agencies. This means that **an employee may not make mid-year changes to plans in which the premiums are paid on a pre-tax basis**. If one of the following qualifying events occurs during the plan year, employees may be allowed to change (add, terminate, increase or decrease) current election(s) in pre-tax benefits. **The change must be completed within 30 days of the event** and must be the result of one of the events below and the changes requested must be consistent with the change in status.

**Qualifying Events for Medical Plan:** You are a timely enrollee for **health** coverage if you apply for coverage and/or add or remove dependents within a 30-day period following any of the qualified life events listed below:

- You are newly hired
- Your marital status changes due to marriage, death of a spouse, divorce, legal separation, or annulment
- You obtain a dependent through marriage, birth, adoption, placement in anticipation of adoption, or foster care placement of an eligible child
- You or your dependents experience an employment status change that results in the loss or gain of coverage under another health benefit plan, and each of the following conditions is met:
  - You and/or your dependents are otherwise eligible for coverage under the State Health Plan, and
  - You and/or your dependents were covered under another health benefit plan at the time this coverage was previously offered and you declined enrollment due to the other coverage, and
  - You and/or your dependents lose coverage under another health benefit plan due to i) the exhaustion of the COBRA continuation period, or ii) the loss of eligibility for that other coverage for reasons including, but not limited to, divorce, loss of dependent status, death of the employee, termination of employment, or reduction in the number of hours of employment, or iii) the termination of the other plan's coverage, or iv) the offered health benefit plan not providing benefits in your service area and no other health benefit plans are available, or v) the termination of employer contributions toward the cost of the other plan's coverage, or vi) meeting or exceeding the lifetime maximum, or vii) the discontinuance of the health benefit plan to similarly situated individuals.
  - You or your dependents become Medicare eligible
  - Your dependent ceases to be an eligible dependent (dependent child turns 26).

- You, your spouse, or your dependents commence or return from an unpaid leave of absence such as Family and Medical Leave or military leave.
- You receive a qualified medical child support order (as determined by the plan administrator) that requires the plan to provide coverage for your children.
- If you, your spouse or dependents experience a cost or coverage change under another group health plan for which an election change was permitted, you may make a corresponding election change under the Flex Plan (e.g. your spouse's employee significantly increases the cost of coverage and as a result, allows the spouse to change his/her election) (not applicable to the Health FSA).
- If you change employment status such that you are no longer expected to average 30 hours of service per week but you do not lose eligibility for coverage under the State Health Plan (e.g. you are in a stability period during which you qualify as full-time), you may still prospectively revoke your election provided that you certify that you have or will enroll yourself (and any other covered family members) in other coverage providing minimum essential coverage (e.g. the Market place) that is effective no later than the first day of the second month following the month that includes the date the original coverage is revoked
- You may prospectively revoke your State Health Plan election if you certify your intent to enroll yourself and any covered dependents in the Marketplace for coverage that is effective beginning no later than the day immediately following the last day of the original coverage that is revoked
- You or your dependents lose coverage due to loss of eligibility under Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and apply for coverage under this Plan within 60 days
- You or your dependents become eligible for premium assistance with respect to coverage under this Plan under Medicaid or CHIP and apply for coverage under this Plan within 60 days.

Note: Obtaining third-party coverage outside of annual enrollment under the Affordable Care Act is not a qualifying event.

In addition, eligible surviving spouses and any eligible surviving dependent child of a deceased retiree, teacher, State employee, member of the General Assembly, former member of the General Assembly, or Disability Income Plan beneficiary are considered a timely enrollee if they were enrolled at the time of the member's death and elect to continue coverage within 90 days after the death of the former State Health Plan member.

**Qualifying Events for Flex Plans:** You are a timely enrollee for **flex** coverage if you apply for coverage and/or add or remove dependents within a 30-day period following any of the qualified life events listed below:

- Marriage
- Divorce - Legal Separation - Annulment
- Death of spouse
- Birth or adoption of child

- Placement of child in foster care
- Termination or commencement of employment by spouse or covered children
- Change from part-time to full-time, or full-time to part-time employment status by employee or spouse
- The taking of an **unpaid leave** of absence by either the employee or spouse
- Attainment of limiting age, change in student status or marriage of dependents
- Entitlement of Medicare or Medicaid by employee, spouse; or dependent required, by court order, to provide coverage for child(ren)

Stop withholding premiums from paycheck (**State Health Plan only**) A significant change (at least \$50 per month) in the health premium benefits in the plan covering spouse and/or dependents (**State Health Plan only**)

Completion of the enrollment must occur within 30 days of employment or the qualifying life event (except as specifically described above) in order to enroll in coverage for the current plan year. Members who do not enroll when first eligible must wait until the next annual enrollment period if they are still eligible. Proof of prior coverage, if applicable, must be returned to the HBR of the employee's employing unit. Retirees and surviving spouses are not required to experience a qualifying event if they wish to dis-enroll themselves or their dependents from the Plan; they may dis-enroll at any time.

Employees adding dependent coverage are required to present eligibility documentation upon request of the benefits department. Failure to prove the requested documentation may result in loss of coverage for the dependent(s).

### **Employee Error**

It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that dependents and other covered family members are eligible for coverage and that necessary changes in coverage are made in a timely manner. Mid-year changes to plans with pre-tax premiums (without a qualifying event) due to employee error are not allowed. **Employee error is not a qualifying event**. GCS does not reimburse an employee for premiums paid when an employee fails to terminate coverage in a timely manner. This includes premiums paid for dependents who have aged out of coverage, ex-spouses, etc.

### **Deadline for Change in Benefits**

When a status change (qualifying event) occurs that changes coverage needs, employees must go to [www.shpnc.org](http://www.shpnc.org) **within 31 days of the event** and enter the change. Documentation to verify the change must be sent to the Benefits Department immediately. Questions should be directed to the Benefits Department prior to the 31-day deadline to determine if changes can be made. The office number is 370-8352 or 370-8996.

## **Change of Address, Telephone and Name**

### **Change Requests**

Employees may make changes by completing the "Change Request" online on the Guilford County Schools Web site: [Change of Address](#).

## Name Change

Name change forms **must be** completed in the Benefits Department. Employees must provide appropriate documentation (marriage license, new social security card, court order, etc.) to process a name change. Depending on the position and the nature of the change, other forms may be required, e.g. change in beneficiary or name change on teaching license.

## Definitions (for Benefits Purposes)

### Permanent Employee

A permanent employee is a person employed with the expectation of permanent employment to fill a position that is to be permanent if present needs and funds continue, or employed for at least six full consecutive monthly pay periods to replace one or more employees who are on leave of absence without pay; and may be full-time or part-time.

### Full-time, Regular Employee

A full-time employee is a person employed at least 30 hours per week and eligible for full benefits. (This definition does not necessarily apply to Visiting International Faculty or retirees returning to work.)

**Full benefits** may include:

1. insurance plans offered by the district
2. financial plans offered by the district
3. leave days (sick, annual etc.) earned at the full rate for years worked
4. State Teachers' and Employees' Retirement System
5. longevity payments
6. Employee Assistance Program
7. leave of absence
8. NC State Employees Credit Union
9. general liability insurance

### Full-time Employee (Not Regular)

This category of an employee is an employee who regularly work 30 hours or more per week, but who are otherwise ineligible for standard/full benefits.

### Part-time Employee

A part-time employee is a person employed at least 20 hours per week, but fewer than 30; eligible for pro-rated (partial) benefits. This does not necessarily apply to Visiting International Faculty or retirees returning to work.

**Pro-Rated (partial) benefits** may include:

1. health insurance may be purchased paying the employee and employers' cost
2. leave days (sick, annual etc.) earned on a pro-rated (partial) basis for years worked
3. longevity payments
4. Employee Assistance Program
5. leave of absence

6. NC State Employees' Credit Union
7. tax-deferred annuities 403 (b) programs
8. general liability insurance

### **Interim Employee**

An interim employee is a person employed on a temporary basis to fill a position for a designated period of time and/or is employed to replace an employee on leave. This can be full-time or part-time.

### **Temporary Employee**

A temporary employee is a person employed less than 20 hours per week, or employed in an interim position for less than six (6) full consecutive monthly pay periods.

## **Insurance**

*Benefits listed are subject to change. The information provided in this handbook is intended to be general in nature and for illustrative purposes only. The plan document and summary plan description for each plan serves as the legal authorities for that plan.*

### **Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA)**

Effective January 1, 2015, the district began offering coverage to employees (and their dependents) who regularly work 30 hours or more per week the opportunity to enroll in adequate and affordable coverage under its employer-sponsored plan.

### **Dependent Children and Age Limitations**

It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that dependent children who age out of a plan or otherwise become ineligible (e.g. no longer a full time student), are removed from coverage. This can only be done with a written request or appropriate form sent to the Benefits Department. GCS is not responsible for reimbursement of premiums due to failure to remove a dependent in a timely fashion (within 30 days).

### **Health Insurance**

All permanent full-time employees of Guilford County Schools are eligible for group insurance provided by the State Health Plan and administered by Blue Cross Blue Shield. The insurance provides coverage for covered hospital and medical expenses. The plans are the Enhanced 80/20 plan, the Traditional 70/30 plan (both Preferred Provider Plans or PPOs), the Consumer-directed Health Plan and the High Deductible Health Plan. The annual enrollment period for health insurance is determined by the State Benefits Department; however it is typically in October of each year. Plan design, premiums and options are subject to change each plan year. For comprehensive information visit the State Health Plan Web site at [www.shpnc.org](http://www.shpnc.org).

Insurance coverage may require a premium payment from an employee. Premiums are typically deducted from an employee's salary each pay day. Employees who work a ten-month schedule and only receive ten paychecks directly from GCS, also have an additional premium deduction (escrow) each pay day to cover the two summer months during which no deduction can be taken.

**Employee Responsibility for Premiums While on Leave without Pay:** When an active employee does not receive a paycheck for some reason, for example, leave without pay, the employee is responsible for making timely premium payments each month. Premiums must be paid in full for all insurance coverage in force. Partial payments are not accepted. It is the employee's responsibility to pay the designated premiums if applicable each month regardless of receipt of a monthly invoice.

By state and IRS policy, failure to make full and timely payments will result in the termination of insurance coverage. If insurance is canceled due to non-payment of premiums, an employee will be unable to re-enroll in the coverage unless he/she experiences a qualifying life event, returns to work or re-enrolls during annual enrollment.

**Employees Returning from a Leave of Absence:** An employee returning to work after an unpaid leave of absence has 30 days from his/her date of return to make changes in insurance.

**Dependent Coverage:** Eligible employees may elect to have a spouse and/or children covered by the same plan by paying a set monthly premium. **Children can be covered for health insurance only up to age 26 regardless of student or marital status providing the child is not eligible for other employer sponsored health benefit coverage.**

It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that dependent children who age out of a plan or otherwise become ineligible (e.g. no longer a full time student), are removed from coverage. This can only be done with a written request or appropriate form sent to the Benefits Department. GCS is not responsible for reimbursement of premiums due to failure to remove a dependent in a timely fashion (within 30 days).

The premium is generally collected through payroll deduction one month in advance and is typically handled as a pre-tax salary deduction. For employees who are paid in ten (10) installments, a monthly escrow is also deducted to cover the cost of health insurance premiums during the summer months. Permanent part-time employees working a minimum of twenty (20) hours per week may purchase health insurance if they pay the total premium (employee and employer costs).

**Premiums:** The **Enhanced 80/20** health insurance plan and the High Deductible Health Plan require an employee contribution to premium for employee-only coverage; however employee-only coverage under the **70/30 Basic Plan** and the **Consumer Directed Plan** can be no charge to the employee. (This is contingent upon completing three wellness activities for the selected plan.) Coverage for dependents requires employee contribution equal to the cost of that coverage.

**Claims:** Claims under the State Health Plan should be filed as soon as possible after services are received. It is the employee's responsibility to file claims. Claims may be filed by medical providers. Claim forms are available on the State Health Plan Web site.

**Plan Changes:** Changes in health and/or dental plans can generally be made only during the annual enrollment periods. Changes in current coverage options may be made with a documented "qualifying event" if the changed enrollment is completed within thirty-one (31) days of the event. "Qualifying events" include but are not limited to: birth of a child, change in marital status, etc. See Benefit Election Status changes. Contact the Benefits Department with questions concerning health insurance and speak with any insurance representative or contact the NC Smart Choice Blue Options PPO Plans' customer service at 1-888-234-2416. (Reference: The State of North Carolina Comprehensive Health Benefit Plan)

## **Dental Insurance**

All permanent full-time employees of the school system are offered dental coverage. Premiums are employee-paid. Three dental plans are available and eligible employees may enroll in only one (1) plan.

**Direct Reimbursement Plan:** In the Direct Reimbursement Plan, the employee pays the bill and submits the claim with a copy of the receipt, to the Plan Supervisor for a fifty (50) percent reimbursement. Claim forms are located on the Guilford County Schools Web site.

**Ameritas Standard Plan:** The Ameritas Standard plan allows the claim to be submitted to the insurance company; the employee pays the remaining fee.

**Ameritas PPO:** The Ameritas PPO allows you to visit a network of dental providers who charge negotiated (reduced) rates for covered services. Visiting a network provider can offer additional savings to covered employees and dependents. These savings are not experienced if a non-network provider is used.

**Dependent Coverage:** An employee may elect to have a spouse and/or eligible children covered by the same plan by paying a set monthly premium. Unmarried children up to age 19 or up to age 26, if enrolled as a full-time student (12 or more hours per semester) at a state-accredited school or college, are eligible for coverage. It is the employee's responsibility to terminate coverage when a dependent is no longer eligible for the plan. GCS does not reimburse an employee for premiums paid when an employee fails to terminate a dependent in a timely manner. Employees should file claims as soon as possible after services are received.

**Enrollment:** The annual enrollment period for dental insurance is usually October of each year. The effective date of coverage is January 1. Once enrolled, no changes in coverage options may be made during the plan year unless there is a benefit election status change/qualifying event. Additional information is available from the Benefits Department or on the GCS Web site. (Reference: The Guilford County Schools Web site)

## **Flexible Benefits**

Guilford County Schools' permanent full-time employees are offered flexible benefits plan. This plan offers employees an opportunity to save money by paying for eligible non-reimbursed medical expenses, dependent care expenses, dental, supplemental hospital, cancer insurance and vision insurance with pre-tax dollars. (Supplemental disability insurance and whole life insurance are offered only on an after-tax basis.)

The annual enrollment period for flexible benefits is October of each year. The effective date of coverage is January 1. Once enrolled, no changes in coverage options may be made during the plan year for pre-tax coverage unless there is a benefit election status change/qualifying event. Additional information is available in the Benefits Department. The plan year for the Cafeteria (Flexible) Benefits program is January 1 through December 31 of each year. The Plan Document and Summary Plan Description for the GCS Cafeteria (Flexible) Benefits Plan are located on the Guilford County Schools Web site. Note: Employees must re-enroll in flexible spending accounts (medical and dependent care) each year. Other cafeteria (flexible) benefits plans will carry over from year to year. The Cafeteria (Flexible) Benefits Plan is chosen through a competitive bid process and is periodically subject to change.

(Reference: Guilford County Schools Cafeteria Benefits Plan Document, Guilford County Schools)

## **Term Life Insurance**

The Guilford County Board of Education provides to all permanent full-time employees basic group term life insurance coverage in the amount of \$5,000. Employees may elect to purchase additional coverage for themselves, a spouse and/or eligible children with premiums payroll-deducted. Unmarried children up to age 19 or up to age 26, if enrolled as a full-time student (12 or more hours per semester) at a state-accredited school or college, are eligible for coverage. Coverage above \$150,000 for a new employee and coverage above \$30,000 for the spouse must be approved by Metropolitan Life Insurance Company after submission of a statement of health. If an employee desires additional coverage after the initial election is completed, he/she must be approved by Metropolitan Life. There is no annual enrollment period for term life insurance. The term life insurance plan has an "Accelerated Benefits Option" feature which may allow partial benefits if an employee is diagnosed with a terminal illness by a medical doctor. The employee may change beneficiaries and lower coverage at any time. To increase coverage, a "Statement of Health" must be completed and approval must be granted by the life insurance carrier. Changes to term life coverage may be made during annual enrollment. Changes in beneficiary may be made at any time.

If an employee remains in active service beyond the age of 70, the combined amount of basic and optional insurance will be reduced based on a published schedule. More information is available in the Benefits Department.

## **Whole Life Insurance**

Whole Life insurance is available through our Cafeteria (Flexible) Benefits Program. This plan features guaranteed: level premiums, cash values and reduced paid-up life insurance at retirement. Coverage is portable and can be purchased on employee, spouse, children and grandchildren.

## **Comprehensive Legal and Identity Theft Protection**

Guilford County Schools offers full-time employees a comprehensive legal plan that provides nationwide coverage and includes services such as will preparation, motor vehicle services, mortgage document assistance and IRS audit assistance. The Identity Theft Protection plan offers free credit reports, continuous credit monitoring and identity restoration. The plan year is January 1 through December 31 of each year. Annual enrollment is generally held in October of each year.

## **Insurance | Removing Children from Coverage**

### **Dental and Life Insurance**

Employees who have chosen to insure their children with dental and/or life insurance may do so until the child turns 19 or if the child is a full-time student at a state accredited school or college, insurance coverage can be extended until age 26 or at the time of graduation, whichever comes first. One semester break per calendar year is allowed for a student to maintain a full-time student status. Summer School is optional and is not considered a semester.

Children graduating from college must be removed before the first day of the month following the event so the employee will not be charged an additional month with no coverage. Married children of any age cannot be insured for dental or life insurance. For more information contact the Benefits Department. It is the employee's responsibility to notify the Benefits Department when a dependent is ineligible for coverage. Examples of ineligible dependent status are divorce or a child graduating from college. Removal of child's coverage is done by paper form. Forms are located on the Guilford County Schools Web site, under "Forms and Handbooks".

### **Health Insurance**

Adult children, who have reached the age of 26 or who are eligible for other employer-sponsored health benefit coverage, must be removed from the Plan. Removal can be done online by going to [www.shpnc.org](http://www.shpnc.org). It is the employee's responsibility to notify the Benefits Department when a child or spouse is no longer eligible for coverage.

## **Insurance | Continuation of Coverage Following Separation from Employment (including COBRA)**

### **Health, Dental, FSA and Vision**

Continuation of group health, dental insurance coverage, the medical reimbursement flexible spending account and vision insurance is available to employee, spouse and/or dependents under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA-Health Insurance) and the Public Health Service Act (PHSA-Dental Insurance) as required by federal law. Qualifying events are governed by these COBRA regulations.

Continuation of this coverage is paid by the member at full cost of the group rate(s), plus an administrative fee, as allowed by federal law. An employee separating from employment will

receive a letter from the Benefits Department, explaining termination of benefits. COBRA and PHSA are offered by the health and dental companies. For more information concerning the COBRA rights and regulations, please contact the insurance provider.

### **Life Insurance | Term Life Continuation**

Continuation of term life insurance coverage is available for the employee or family only through conversion or portability. Information is provided at separation.

### **Life Insurance | Whole Life Continuation**

Continuation of whole life insurance is available through direct billing. Information provided at separation.

## **HIPAA | Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act**

The HIPAA Act is a federal law that was passed in 1996, with additional guidelines issued December 4, 2002. A portion of this federal law is called the “Privacy Rule.” Through the Privacy Rule, the federal government seeks to protect and keep private an individual’s personal health information (PHI). Our covered benefits plans are HIPAA compliant. PHI cannot be released to others without your written authorization. Authorization forms can be downloaded from the State Health Plan (see below) and are available from the Benefits Department. An excellent source for additional HIPAA information can be found on the State Health Plan Web site at [www.shpnc.org](http://www.shpnc.org).

## **Liability Insurance**

All employees of Guilford County Schools are covered by the Board of Education's School Professional Legal Liability Insurance Policy. Each claim has a \$1,000,000 limit of liability and an aggregate limit of \$1,000,000. The program covers legal liability for an act, error or omission in services rendered in the discharge of school district duties. The school system also carries general liability insurance coverage.

The NC General Assembly’s 2011-12 Appropriations Act directed the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction to implement a new Excess Educator’s Legal Liability policy covering all employees, including new hires, tutors and volunteers.

Through the new policy, responses are provided to claims for professional activities on a member insured in the course and scope of his or her duties as an employee of a NC education agency or accredited public school district, state education agency or charter educational institution. Coverage is automatic and is in excess of that currently provided by the District e.g. commercial general liability, errors and omissions, employment practices liability and any other valid and collectible insurance.

For more information, including a copy of the policy please see below:

1. <http://www.professionalliabilitync.com> or
2. Chartis insurance at 800-849-0200 or [contact@professionalliabilitync.com](mailto:contact@professionalliabilitync.com).
3. <http://www.professionalliabilitync.com/claims/> (claims information.)

## NC HealthSmart Wellness Programs

The NC HealthSmart Wellness Programs are online tools to help employees manage their personal health. Visit [www.shpnc.org](http://www.shpnc.org) and click on NC HealthSmart. The NC HealthSmart Web site includes:

1. Health Risk Assessment (HRA) survey
2. Personal Action Plan based on your HRA results
3. Lifestyle improvement programs
4. Health information references for any health or medical question

## Workers' Compensation

Provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act are applicable to all paid school employees. Workers' Compensation provides medical benefits and a weekly compensation benefit equal to 66 2/3 percent of the employee's average weekly earnings for the year prior to the work-related injury or illness, up to a maximum established by the Industrial Commission each year.

### Documentation

When an employee is injured on the job, he/she must report the injury to the immediate supervisor **immediately** following the accident. The employer's "Report of Injury to Employee (Form 19)" **must** be completed immediately online by the principal/supervisor or other designee, giving all of the pertinent detail of the work-related accident or illness. The completed "Employee Statement" (Statement B) **must** accompany the Form 19. Forms are available on the Key Risk and Corvel Web sites. The employee should be given a list of approved medical facilities to be used for the first or initial visit. An authorization form (for medical treatment) and the Form 19 also must be given to the employee. Another copy of the Form 19 must remain on file at the site for five years. All original documents should be sent to the Benefits Department.

### Medical Treatment

If an injury requires medical attention, an employee must be seen first by a medical doctor at a medical facility approved by our Workers' Compensation carrier. Failure to use an approved facility may result in delayed payment to the doctor and may result in the employee being responsible in full, for payment of any and/or all medical bills. Any treatment needed after the first or initial visit can only be authorized by the Workers' Compensation carrier. Employees injured on the job in a compensable accident, requiring medical or therapy visits during regularly scheduled working hours in order to reach maximum medical improvement, will not be charged leave for time lost from

work for required treatment. Paid time should be limited to reasonable time for treatment and travel; any excess time will be charged as vacation/bonus or sick leave or leave without pay.

## **Compensation**

Eligible employees receive the Workers' Compensation weekly benefit after the required waiting period of seven (7) calendar days (including Saturday and Sunday), effective on the eighth day of the disability. During the seven-day waiting period, the employee may choose to use available sick leave, annual leave or bonus leave—in this order. The employee may also take leave without pay for the seven (7) day waiting period. While on workers' compensation leave, an employee is in pay status and will continue to receive total state service credit.

The weekly benefit may be supplemented with the use of partial sick or vacation/bonus leave, earned prior to the injury, in accordance with a schedule published by the Office of State Personnel each year. This can provide an income approximately equal to their take-home or net pay.

## **Additional Benefits**

If the injury results in disability of more than 21 calendar days, the Workers' Compensation weekly benefit is allowed from the date of disability. While on Workers' Compensation leave, an eligible employee continues to accumulate vacation and sick leave if the employee earned such leave while working. Leave days earned while on Workers' Compensation leave will be added to the employee's leave account upon return to work. Absences due to a workers' compensation covered injury or illness will count as part of the employee's Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) entitlement for that year.

Any employee absent for more than ten (10) days due to a workers' compensation compensable injury or illness must also complete a "Request for Leave of Absence" form. Failure to complete this form may result in incorrect payment.

The employee is responsible for facilitating correct and timely processing of medical/prescription services by informing all concerned parties (GCS Benefits Department, the pharmacy and the Workers' Compensation carrier) of the status of the claim. Notification of these parties ensures that bills are paid in a timely manner. Transportation costs may be eligible for reimbursement.

**Important:** *Workers' Compensation claims must never be filed with a health insurance carrier. All treatment, tests, equipment or prescriptions must have prior authorization before the appropriate carrier can pay them. Failure to follow Industrial Commission guidelines could jeopardize eligibility for Workers' Compensation benefits.*

## **Returning to Work and Light Duty Work**

An employee returning to work after a workers' compensation injury or accident (as well as any medical leave of absence) must submit a physician's release before returning to work. GCS will attempt to reasonably accommodate an employee's need for a light duty assignment. (Reference: The Provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act G. S. 115c-337; State Personnel Manual Employee Benefits and Awards section 6)

## Episode of Violence

Any permanent full-time employee who suffers an injury and is disabled while engaged in the course of his or her employment may receive full salary if the injury or disability arose from an episode of violence and the employee did not participate in or provoke the violence. The employee meets the definition of permanence by having been in full payroll status for six (6) consecutive months.

The salary can continue for one year, the continuation of the disability, or the time during which the employee is unable to engage in his or her employment because of the injury, whichever period is shorter. While receiving regular salary under this provision, the employee is not eligible to receive weekly salary benefits under Workers' Compensation. However, the employee may receive medical, hospital, drug and related expense payments from Workers' Compensation if applicable. The employee is not required to use any paid leave (sick, annual, personal, etc.) if the approved absence is due to an episode of violence.

An employee who has experienced an episode of violence must complete the same forms as in a Workers' Compensation claim. Refer to the Workers' Compensation section.

## Miscellaneous Benefits

### Employee Assistance

Employee Assistance takes a different form this year with assistance available free of charge via MetLife and third-party coverage through the covered employees health insurance plan. While employees may continue to access services from Cornerstone Psychological Services and file a claim via the insurance providers or make arrangement as a private payer.

#### **MetLife**

Full-time employees may receive [grief counseling](#) aimed at assisting employees cope with grief and mourning associated with the death of a loved one, or with major life changes that trigger feeling of grief such as:

- **divorce**
- **death of a loved one**
- **serious or terminal illness**
- **loss of a pet**

This counseling is available to employees covered under our non-contributory (basic life) coverage, their spouses, beneficiaries, and other family members who reside with the employee.

It is provided by Harris, Rothenberg International, Inc. and the service may be initiated 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

1. by calling the toll-free number, (855) 609-9989; or
2. by web at <https://griefcounseling.harrisrothenberg.net/default.aspx>
  - a. Username: MetLife
  - b. Password: grief

All assistance is confidential—between the employee and the counseling service provider.

### **Other Support**

Employees with health insurance coverage may access counseling services confidentially by contacting a provider of their choosing, for example, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Social Services, etc.

### **Savings Bonds**

As of January 1, 2011, the U.S. Department of Treasury stopped issuing paper savings bonds through payroll deduction. Interested employees should go to [www.treasurydirect.gov](http://www.treasurydirect.gov) and create an account. TreasuryDirect can debit your personal bank account.

### **Social Security**

All employees participate in the social security system. Contributions are made by both the employee and employer. Benefits may include retirement, pensions, disability payments and survivor's insurance. The tax rate for contributions is determined annually.

### **401(k)**

All full-time employees are eligible to participate by payroll deduction in the 401(k) program administered by the State of North Carolina through Prudential Retirement. Contact the Benefits Department for information and enrollment forms. Information may also be obtained from the Prudential Retirement Web site at [www.prudential.com/ncplans](http://www.prudential.com/ncplans) or call 1-866-627-5267 or 624-0151.

### **403(b) Annuities**

All employees earning a consistent monthly income are eligible to participate in the 403(b) Plan available through payroll deduction. The 403(b) plan is administered by a third party administrator, JEM Resource Partners. Participants in the 403(b) Plan are assessed an administrative fee of \$1.50 per month via payroll deduction. For additional information call 1-800-943-9179 or visit JEM's Web site (<http://www.jemtpa.com>).

### **457 Deferred Compensation Plan**

All permanent employees are eligible to participate in the State of North Carolina 457 Deferred Compensation Plan administered by Prudential. A 457 plan is similar to a 403(b) plan where contributions are made through payroll reduction, occur on a pre-tax basis and accumulate tax-deferred until withdrawn. The minimum monthly contribution is \$20. For more information call 1-866-627-5267.

### **State Employees' Credit Union**

All employees, except individuals employed through contracted services, may join the North Carolina State Employees' Credit Union. Upon obtaining membership, the employee's spouse,

children and parents may become members. In addition, substitutes paid by Guilford County Schools are eligible to obtain membership in the credit union. Information is available from the State Employees' Credit Union's Web site: [www.ncsecu.org](http://www.ncsecu.org) and from the Benefits Department.

Information regarding amusement park discounts is available from the State Employees' Credit Union Web site at [www.ncsecu.org](http://www.ncsecu.org).

## Retirement System

### **Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System**

All permanent full-time employees are required to join the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System. Eligible employees contribute 6% of gross salary (pre-tax) to the Retirement System. Guilford County Schools may make a contribution as established by the North Carolina General Assembly for each permanent full-time employee. Monthly benefits at retirement are based upon the employee's four (4) highest consecutive years of salary, years of state service and/or age at retirement.

### **Employees Hired On or Before July 31, 2011**

After five (5) years of creditable service, an employee hired prior to August 1, 2011 is considered "vested" and may be eligible for benefits from the retirement system. Full, unreduced retirement benefits may be received at age 65 with five years of service; age 60 with 25 years of service, or at any age with 30 years of service. Reduced benefits may be received at age 50 with 20 years of service or age 60 with five years of service.

If an employee was hired before October 1, 2006 and meets the age and service requirements for full or reduced retirement, the employee may be eligible for free health insurance depending on the plan selected. For employees first hired on or after October 1, 2006:

- Full coverage as retired employees requires 20 or more years of retirement service credit.
- Employees with 10 years but less than 20 years of retirement service credit will be eligible for coverage under the Plan on a partially contributory basis (50/50).
- Retired teachers, State employees and members of the General Assembly with less than 10 years of retirement service credit are eligible for coverage under the Plan on a fully contributory basis if first hired on or after Oct 1, 2006.

### **Employees Hired On or After August 1, 2011**

This summer, the NC General Assembly reduced the creditable service requirement for vesting for active employees hired on or after August 1, 2011 to five (5) years from the previous ten (10) years of creditable service.

## **Retirement Effective Dates**

All retirements are effective the first day of the month. Licensed employees are asked to sign a resignation form and to give a 30 calendar day notice, so as to provide a smooth transition. Classified employees are asked to sign a resignation form and to give a 14 calendar day notice. Principals and administrators are asked to sign a resignation form and to give a 60 calendar day notice.

## **Beneficiaries**

It is extremely important that permanent full-time employees designate beneficiaries with the retirement system. If the beneficiaries are not on file upon death, benefits transfer to the employee's estate.

Change of retirement beneficiaries is possible at any time prior to retirement and under certain option provisions after retirement. If an employee has less than ten (10) years of service, the beneficiary(ies) can be changed through ORBIT, the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System's secure Web site. If an employee has more than ten (10) years of service, the beneficiary (ies) must be changed by completing Form 2RC "Designating Beneficiary(ies) for Retirement System Contributions" and Form 2DB-"Designating Beneficiary(ies) for the Death Benefit".

## **Refund of Retirement Contributions**

If an employee terminates employment with the State, the employee may request a refund of contributions (penalty assessed) or a rollover of contributions into an IRA (no penalty assessed) as an alternative to a monthly pension. The employee should complete Form 5 "Withdrawing Your Retirement Service Credit and Contributions". Form 5 should not be completed until the date of employee termination. The refund is not available until sixty (60) days after the effective date of resignation or termination per State Law. Interim employees may not withdraw their funds during the months of June, July, August or September. Interim employees may apply for withdrawal of funds after October 1.

## **Death Benefit**

A death benefit between \$25,000 and \$50,000 is payable to a designated beneficiary after an employee has completed one year (365 days) as a contributing member of the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System. The amount paid is determined by employee's annual salary. Employee retirement contributions are also paid to the designated beneficiary. The death benefit remains in place for 180 days following an employee's resignation.

## **ORBIT**

Online Retirement Benefits through Integrated Technology is provided by the NC Retirement System. Active employees may register and gain access to current account information. Visit [www.myncretirement.com](http://www.myncretirement.com) to register. For more detailed information, refer to the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System's Web site: [www.myncretirement.com](http://www.myncretirement.com). (Reference: State Board of Education Policy, "Your Retirement Benefits: Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System of North Carolina")

**Employee Disability:** A comprehensive short-term and long-term disability income plan is provided at the employer's expense for permanent full-time employees who are members of the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System and meet certain state service requirements. Please note: donated leave may not be used beyond the 60<sup>th</sup> day of disability.

**Short-term Disability:** The short-term disability plan is available to disabled employees with at least one year (365 days) of contributory retirement service within the last 36 months. It begins on the 61st day of disability and provides monthly income equal to 50 percent of one-twelfth of the annual base salary, local supplement (if applicable), and longevity for up to 365 calendar days, with a maximum of \$3,000 per month. Short-term disability benefits may be extended for as many as 365 days beyond the original short-term period if approved by the State Medical Board.

**Long-term Disability:** The long-term disability income plan begins after the short-term plan ends for the totally and permanently disabled permanent full-time employee with five years of contributory retirement service. The five years of service must be within the previous eight years. The long-term disability plan provides monthly income equal to 65 percent of one-twelfth of the annual base salary, local supplement (if applicable), and longevity, up to \$3,900 per month until the employee qualifies for unreduced retirement benefits. Long-term benefits, however, are coordinated with Social Security disability payments and Workers' Compensation benefits. A permanently disabled employee may choose to apply for Retirement Disability if eligibility requirements are met. Contact the Benefits Department for details.

For more detailed information refer to the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System Web site: [www.myncretirement.com](http://www.myncretirement.com). Click on Benefits Handbook under Retirement, and then click on Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System Booklet. (Reference: Disability Income Plan of the State of North Carolina, [www.myncretirement.com](http://www.myncretirement.com).)

## Holidays

### General Holidays

Holidays are determined by the State Board of Education. The local board of education determines when holidays are scheduled in the school calendar. Guilford County Schools develops and adopts employment calendars for ten-month and twelve-month employees each year that include the appropriate holidays.

Paid holidays are granted only to employees who are in the position on the day on which the holiday is scheduled or in pay status for one-half or more of the workdays of the month. Temporary employees are not entitled to paid holidays.

### Religious Holidays

Absence from work for bona fide religious holidays may be allowed for a maximum of two days in any one school year with prior approval from the Superintendent or his/her designee. Bona fide religious holidays generally are considered to be those holidays that appear on the National

Conference of Community and Justice “Interfaith Calendar.” Any other request will require appropriate documentation. Written requests should be submitted to the Chief Human Resources Officer at least two (2) weeks in advance of the proposed absence. Absence for these religious holidays will be with full pay; however, the employee must agree to make up the amount of time for which his or her absence has been excused. The time must be made up at a time agreed upon by the employee and his or her immediate supervisor. Absences will not be granted for bona fide religious holidays which fall on days that the school system is not in operation. (Reference: Financial Policy and Procedures Manual)

## Leaves and Absences

### Attendance

Guilford County Schools’ employees are encouraged to use available leave benefits options when necessary. However, employees should carefully consider the impact that their absence(s) will have on the overall instructional program and on the achievement of students. Even the best substitute employee cannot provide the high level of continuity of service provided by the regular employee. Every employee absence diminishes the overall quality of the instructional program. From an employee perspective, unused accumulated sick leave and/or annual vacation leave can significantly enhance an employee’s financial entitlements at retirement or upon separation from employment with the school district. More detailed information is contained in the publication, “Guilford County Schools Employee Guide: Leaves and Absences,” available on the Guilford County Schools Web site.

### Short-Term Leaves of Absence

A leave of absence for a period of up to ten (10) workdays will be considered a short-term leave of absence. A short-term leave of absence may be with or without pay.

**Short-term leave of absence with pay:** The appropriate supervisor has authority to approve a leave of absence with pay for a period of **up to ten (10) days** for appropriate reasons. Paid leave (annual leave, miscellaneous bonus leave, sick leave, personal leave and extended sick leave) will be used in accordance with state regulations and may be advanced up to the amount that will be earned within the current fiscal year with the approval of the employee’s supervisor.

**Short-term leave of absence without pay:** The appropriate supervisor has authority to approve up to five (5) days of leave without pay for appropriate reasons. The appropriate supervisor's superior has authority to approve up to an additional five (5) days of leave without pay for appropriate reasons. A full day's salary reduction will be made for each day the employee is absent. Multiple short-term leaves of absence without pay will not be approved for more than ten (10) cumulative workdays per fiscal year (July 1- June 30). If additional leave is requested, the employee should follow the procedures for requesting long-term leaves of absence.

### Long-Term Leaves of Absence

A leave of absence for a period exceeding ten (10) workdays will be considered a long-term leave of absence. A long-term leave of absence may be with or without pay. Guilford County Schools

requires the employee to use available paid leave before going on leave without pay. Sick leave, annual leave and personal leave may not be advanced when an employee is requesting a long-term leave of absence. Only leave which is earned until such time as the employee goes off the payroll may be used.

**Paid Leave:** Annual leave, miscellaneous bonus leave, sick leave, personal leave, and extended sick leave will be used in accordance with state regulations. During the period of paid leave, employees continue to earn full benefits.

**Long-term Leave of Absence with Pay:** The Benefits Department has authority to approve a leave of absence with pay for a period exceeding ten (10) workdays for the allowable reasons listed below.

**Long-term Leave of Absence without Pay:** The Benefits Department has authority to approve a leave of absence without pay for a period exceeding ten (10) workdays for the allowable reasons listed below. Allowable reasons for which long-term leave of absence may be requested are:

1. Military leave, for active duty;
2. Parental leave, for the birth or adoption of a child or placement of a foster child for a period of up to twelve (12) calendar months;
3. Medical leave, for personal illness or temporary disability that prevents an employee from performing his or her usual duties, for a period up to twelve (12) calendar months in excess of sick leave provisions;
4. Family medical leave, in order to provide care for an immediate family member who is critically ill, for a period up to twelve (12) calendar months;
5. Educational leave, if the employee is enrolled in a full-time program at a college or university, in accordance with Board of Education Policy GBRL, for a period up to twelve (12) calendar months;
6. Qualifying Exigency leave, when eligible employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent (the military member or family member) is on covered active duty or call to covered active duty status (or has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty). For Regular Armed Forces members, the Final Rule defines "covered active duty or call to covered active duty status" as duty during the deployment of the member with the Armed Forces to a foreign country.

For a member of the Reserve components of the Armed Forces (members of the National Guard and Reserves), "covered active duty or call to covered active duty status" means duty during the deployment of the member with the Armed Forces to a foreign country under a federal call or order to active duty in support of a contingency operation.

NOTE: The "Armed Forces" is defined as the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard.

7. Military Caregiver leave for an employee who is a spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin of a Veteran or other covered service member recovering from a serious medical injury or illness sustained in the line of active military duty. In order for the care of a Veteran to qualify as Military Caregiver Leave, the Veteran must have served in active service within five (5) years preceding the date on which he or she needs care
8. Leaves under #2, #3, #4, #6 and #7 are also given in conjunction with FMLA, the federal Family Medical Leave Act

## **Benefits Continuation While on Leave without Pay | Employee Responsibility**

GCS offers insurance coverage to all eligible employees. This coverage may require a premium payment from the employee. Premiums are typically deducted from an employee's salary each pay day. Employees who work a ten-month schedule and only receive ten paychecks directly from GCS also have an additional premium deduction (escrow) each pay day to cover the two summer months during which no deduction can be taken.

**When an active employee does not receive a paycheck for some reason, for example, leave without pay, the employee is responsible for making timely premium payments each month. Premiums must be paid in full for all insurance coverage in force. Partial payments are not accepted. It is the employee's responsibility to pay the designated premiums, if applicable, each month regardless of receipt of a monthly invoice.**

By State and IRS policy, failure to make full and timely payments will result in the termination of insurance coverage. If insurance is canceled due to non-payment of premiums, an employee will be unable to re-enroll in the coverage unless he/she experiences a qualifying life event, returns to work or re-enrolls during annual enrollment.

Employees returning to work after an unpaid leave of absence has 30 days from his/her date of return to make changes in insurance.

## **Absences of More Than Ten Days**

A request for a leave of absence form must be completed and submitted to the Benefits Department if the absence is for more than 10 days. These absences must be approved by the Benefits Department. The exceptions to this procedure are: military leave (for annual training and annual physical), the use of extended sick leave, and the use of voluntary shared leave. The "Request for Leave of Absence" form (HUM-F001) must be completed for each of these exceptions even if the absence is 10 days or less. The appropriate documentation for the type of leave requested must also be submitted to the Benefits Department for approval.

## **Death in Family**

Employees may use sick leave for death in immediate family.

## Leave without Pay

Guilford County Schools requires the employee to use available paid leave before going on leave without pay. An employee may be granted a leave of absence without pay for periods as granted in the discretion of the Superintendent and in accordance with the rules and regulations adopted by the School Board. Extended leaves of absence may be granted in accordance with local rules and regulations. Whenever possible, employees will give advance notice of requests for leave of absence as documented in the "Employees' Guide: Leaves and Absences" available on the Guilford County Schools Web site under Human Resources/Forms and Handbooks. The Board may determine when the leave will begin or end, based on a consideration of the welfare of the students and the need for continuity of instruction.

(Reference: NC Benefits and Employment Policy Manual)

## Other Employment While on Leave

Except for specific authorization found in the state disability plan, **it is not the practice of the school district to authorize a leave and allow employees to accept other employment.** Employees should consider this limitation prior to requesting leave. Any exceptions to this practice should be requested by the employee at the time leave approval is sought. Any employee on an approved leave of absence should request approval from the Benefits Department prior to accepting other employment. The request will be reviewed and a letter of notification will be mailed to the employee. **If an employee is receiving short-term disability and working at another job, name of employer, gross and net earnings and date of payment must be reported to the Benefits Department.**

## Return from Long-Term Leave of Absence

When an employee returns to work from an approved long-term leave of absence without pay, the school district will attempt to place that employee in his/her original position if possible. However, in cases when this is not possible, the employee will be placed in an equivalent position at another location within the school district. An employee returning to work from a medical leave (for self) must provide a note from the medical provider releasing the employee to return to work. An employee returning to work after an absence of one year or more must submit a new North Carolina Health Certificate to the Benefits Department. If insurance benefits were canceled while on leave of absence, it is the employee's responsibility to re-enroll. An employee can call the Benefits Department for more information and assistance in enrolling in insurance benefits.

## Sick Leave

**Overview:** Sick leave is earned by all permanent employees at the rate of one (1) day for each monthly pay period they are working or on paid leave for one-half or more of the work days in the pay period (pro-rated for part-time - 50 percent or more). This leave may be used for personal illness, injury, temporary disability, illness or death in the immediate family, or employee medical appointments.

**Approval:** For periods of ten (10) working days or less, employees must complete a "Leave Request" (form FIN-FO17) available in the school/department office to request/document the

absence. The immediate site supervisor is authorized to approve requests from employees for use of accumulated sick leave for up to ten (10) consecutive days. Requests for more than five (5) consecutive days must be accompanied by a doctor's statement. The appropriate supervisor or the Human Resources Department may require, at any time, a statement from a medical or other acceptable proof that the employee was unable to work. For periods of more than ten (10) working days, employees must complete a "Request for Leave of Absence" (form HUM-F001) also available in the school/department office and the GCS Web site. The Benefits Department has authority to approve requests from employees for use of accumulated sick leave for a period exceeding ten (10) workdays.

**Charging:** Sick leave must be charged in half-day minimums. It may only be taken within existing guidelines for personal illness, or an illness or death in the immediate family as defined by the State Board of Education. Unused sick leave can be added to length of service for pension computation at retirement. Effective October 1, 1989, sick leave balances are restored for employees who separate from service and return to employment in a permanent status within 60 months (63 months for teachers).

(Reference: NC Benefits and Employment Policy Manual; Guilford County Schools Employee Guide: Leaves and Absences)

### **Extended Sick Leave (Teachers and Media Specialists Only)**

**Eligibility:** Permanent full-time or part-time classroom teachers and media specialists, who are absent due to their own personal illness or injury in excess of their accumulated sick leave and available annual leave will be allowed extended sick leave of up to twenty (20) workdays throughout the regular term of employment.

**Deductions:** Employees on extended sick leave receive full salary less the required substitute deduction. This deduction is mandatory whether or not a substitute is employed. The standard deduction is \$50 a day. In order for a new employee to be eligible, he/she must have reported to work.

**Approval:** If the absence is 10 days or less, the employee must complete the "Request for Leave of Absence" form; (HUM-F001) available in the school/department office and the GCS Web site. If the absence is for more than 10 days, a Request for Leave of Absences form (HUM-F001) must be completed. Both forms require medical documentation. This information must be submitted to the Benefits Department for approval. Requests to use extended sick leave should be made no later than five (5) days after the extended sick leave begins. If this is not possible, employee must provide written justification to the Director of Benefits. Extended sick leave is not available beyond the waiting period for Worker's Compensation Leave (7 days) and Short-Term Disability Leave (60 days).

### **Voluntary Shared Leave (Donated Leave)**

The purpose of voluntary shared leave (donated leave) is to provide economic relief for employees who are likely to suffer financial hardship because of a prolonged absence or frequent short-term absences caused by a serious medical condition. The serious medical condition must be

documented by a medical doctor, and follow the definition and guidelines as set forth in the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993.

**Eligibility:** Only permanent full-time or part-time employees who have exhausted all accumulated paid leave (sick leave, annual leave, miscellaneous bonus leave if applicable) are eligible to receive donated leave. An employee need not exhaust personal leave and the 20 days of extended sick leave to be eligible for voluntary shared leave.

An employee who is eligible to receive benefits from the State of North Carolina Disability Income Plan and/or a private supplemental disability insurance policy is not eligible to receive donated leave. Voluntary shared leave may be used during the required sixty (60) day waiting period for the Disability Income Plan or any applicable waiting period under a private policy.

The following two (2) conditions must be met before an eligible employee can request Voluntary Share Leave:

1. Must be absent for more than five (5) consecutive days or a series of more than five (5) days over a period of six (6) months **due to the same medical reason.**
2. Must be absent due to a serious medical condition (as defined by the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993) of self or immediate family member.

**Requests:** Employees may apply for donated leave by completing three forms:

1. "Application for Voluntary Shared Leave" (form HUM-F021)
2. "Request for a Leave of Absence" (form HUM-F001)
3. "U.S. Department of Labor" (forms WH-380E and WH-380-F).

Forms are located in the Benefits Department and on the GCS Web site. The "U.S. Department of Labor" form is used to document a serious medical condition. Submit forms to the Benefits Department.

Application may also be made by a third person acting on the employee's behalf if the employee is unable to make application. The application must include a doctor's statement, and an authorization for release of medical information signed by the person who is suffering the medical condition (or parent or guardian of a minor). This release may also be signed by any legally authorized party.

Employees may not use the GCS email system or other GCS technology to request donated leave. An employee and/or supervisor may not use mass solicitation (group solicitation of GCS employees) outside of his/her own work location. Employees are discouraged from distributing any medical information, including his/her own, as the district is unable to ensure confidentiality. Employees not complying with this policy may be denied use of donated leave and face disciplinary action.

**Leave Donation:** Any eligible employee in the school system may donate annual vacation leave to any approved employee in the same school system. Family members may donate annual vacation

leave, miscellaneous bonus leave or sick leave to immediate family members in the same school system, another N. C. school system, community college or state agency as defined by the State Board of Education. Effective January 1, 2011, sick leave may be donated to an employee of a public school system (LEA). A public school employee cannot donate more than five days of sick leave per year to any one, non-family member.

Employees of a school system may donate annual vacation leave to the immediate family of a co-worker if the co-worker's immediate family member is eligible for donated leave and works in another school system, state agency or community college. In order to donate leave an employee must complete a "Authorization to Donate Leave" (form HUM-F020) and submit it to the Benefits Department. The form may be obtained from the Benefits Department or the GCS Web site.

**Timelines:** Requests to use voluntary shared leave and requests to donate leave must be received in the Benefits Department before the leave begins or before the employee returns to work. If this is not possible, employee must provide written justification to the Director of Benefits. Anyone who would like more information should contact the Benefits Department. Donated leave must be received no more than 45 calendar days after the end of an authorized leave in order to be used. (Reference: NC Benefits and Employment Policy Manual, Guilford County Schools Employee Guide: Leaves and Absences)

## **Personal Leave**

Personal Leave is earned only by permanent full-time or part-time classroom teachers and media specialists. All such full-time instructional personnel earn personal leave at the rate of .20 days for each full month of employment not to exceed two (2) days per year. Part-time personnel earn at a prorated share, the rate for full-time employees.

**Accumulation:** Personal leave may be accumulated without any applicable maximum until June 30 of each year. Eligible employees may carry forward to July 1 a maximum of five (5) days of personal leave; the remainder of the personal leave will be converted to sick leave on June 30. At the time of retirement, accumulated personal leave may be converted to sick leave for creditable service towards retirement.

**Use:** Personal leave may be used only upon the authorization of the employee's immediate supervisor. Personal leave may not be taken on the first day the employee is required to report for the school year, on a required teacher workday, or days scheduled for State testing, or on the day before or the day after a holiday or scheduled vacation day, unless the request is approved by the principal. On all other days, if the request is made at least five (5) days in advance, the request will be automatically granted subject to the availability of a substitute teacher, and the employee cannot be required to provide a reason for the request. With the approval of the supervisor, a teacher can use Personal Leave without a substitute teacher deduction on an optional workday.

Eligible employees using accrued personal leave will receive full salary less the required substitute deduction, except for using personal leave on non-protected teacher workdays. Eligible employees using accrued personal leave on non-protected teacher workdays will receive full salary. To use a

personal leave day, the employee must complete a "Leave Request" (form FIN-017) available in the school/department office.

**Transfer:** Employees may transfer personal leave days between local school administrative units. The local school administrative unit will credit an employee who has separated from service and is re-employed within 60 months from the date of separation with all personal leave accumulated at the time of separation. Local school administrative units will not advance personal leave. See "Use of Personal Leave Chart" in the Appendix.

(Reference NC Benefits and Employment Policy Manual; Guilford County Schools Employee Guide- Leaves and Absences; HB 15; HB 2436-Section 26.21a)

### **Annual Leave (Vacation)**

Guilford County Schools values the contributions, health and well-being of each employee. The purpose of paid annual vacation leave is to allow and encourage all employees to take time off from work. G.S. 115C-316 requires that the first ten (10) days of annual leave earned by 10- or 11-month employees during any fiscal year be scheduled for use in the school calendar adopted by the local Board of Education.

Annual vacation leave will be earned as follows:

<b>Years of State Service Employment</b>	<b>Leave Days per Period</b>	<b>Maximum Carryover</b>
< 5	1.17	30.000
5 < 10	1.42	30.000
10 < 15	1.67	30.000
15 < 20	1.92	30.000
≥20	2.17	30.000

**Leave Accumulation:** Annual vacation leave may be accumulated without any applicable maximum until June 30 of each calendar year. On June 30 accumulated annual vacation leave in excess of 30 days will be converted to sick leave so that only 30 workdays of annual vacation leave are carried forward to July 1 of each year. An employee with more than 30 days of annual vacation leave who separates from employment prior to June 30 is not eligible for this conversion and will be paid a maximum of 30 days or 240 hours.

Employees are eligible to request additional available annual vacation leave during each year for a stated purpose. State and local regulations determine when annual leave may be taken. Annual leave must be authorized by the immediate supervisor and the employee must complete a "Leave Request" (form FIN-F017) available in the school/department office to request/document the absence. Guilford County Schools requires annual vacation leave to be used in one-half or whole day units.

All full-time and part-time permanent employees who work or are on paid leave (including paid holidays and when on Worker's Compensation) for one-half or more of the work days in a monthly

pay period, earn annual vacation leave based on the length of total State of North Carolina service. Annual vacation leave for a part-time permanent employee will be computed on a pro-rata basis.

**Student Nutrition Services** personnel who require a substitute normally may not take annual vacation leave at any time that students are scheduled to be in attendance.

**Instructional Personnel and Bus Drivers:** In 2012, the legislature amended the law permitting **instructional employees** and bus drivers who work 11 or 12 months in a year-round or extended year and require substitutes to use annual vacation leave on days students are in attendance with prior approval of the principal or supervisor.

**Bus Drivers:** Bus drivers who work less than 20 hours per week and who are not otherwise entitled to earn vacation as described above are entitled to earn one day per year (equal in length to one regular workday for each driver) if:

1. They are employed to drive a regular daily route (i.e., they are not substitute drivers), and
2. They were employed as regular drivers the entire previous school year.

### **Bonus Vacation Leave**

Bonus vacation leave was received in three special distributions during the 2002-2003, 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 school years. In each of the three special distributions, eligible employees in permanent full-time, 12-month positions received bonus vacation leave. The leave was received pro-rata if employed less than full-time and/or less than 12 months. Unused bonus leave granted in 2012 expired on June 30, 2013 and was not eligible for carry over.

Bonus vacation leave balance is tracked separately and carries forward each year until used or paid out at retirement or separation. It is not included in the 30-day limit of the annual vacation leave that can be carried forward on June 30<sup>th</sup> each year and does not roll into sick leave. Bonus vacation leave may be donated under the same rules and provisions as annual vacation. Bonus vacation leave can be used under the same circumstances and provisions as annual vacation leave.

An employee who transfers between local administrative units or to or from a state agency must have all unused bonus vacation leave transferred to the new school system or state agency. Upon separation from employment, any unused bonus vacation leave balance will be paid out at the daily rate at the time of separation. The payment is in addition to the annual vacation leave balance (up to 30 days) that is paid at separation.

(Reference: Public Schools of North Carolina Benefits and Employment Policy Manual)

### **Family and Medical Leave Act**

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), an act of the federal government, allows eligible employees to take unpaid leave for up to twelve (12) weeks during each 12-month FMLA leave

year. **Guilford County Schools requires an employee to use available paid leave before taking leave without pay.** Guilford County Schools must maintain any employer-paid health benefits while the employee is on FMLA leave.

**Reasons:** FMLA may be taken for the following reasons:

1. The birth of a child of the employee and in order to care for the child;
2. The placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care;
3. Taking care of the employee's spouse, child or parent who has a serious health condition;
4. Taking care of a service member recovering from a serious injury or illness sustained in the line of active duty. This also applies to a veteran, if the veteran was on active duty within five (5) years of the date the Veteran needs care. (Must meet eligibility requirements);
5. A serious health condition of the employee that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of the employee's position; or
6. The notification of spouse, son, daughter or parent being called to active duty and has been deployed to a foreign country as a member of the Armed Forces. This applies to **any** member of the Armed Forces whether reservists or full-time military personnel.

An employee is eligible for FMLA leave if **both** of the following conditions are met:

1. The employee has worked for Guilford County Schools for at least twelve (12) months, which need not be consecutive; and
2. The employee has worked at least 1,250 hours for Guilford County Schools during the twelve (12) month period immediately preceding the beginning of the FMLA leave.

**Calendar:** The FMLA leave year is a rolling twelve-month period measured forward from the date the employee first takes FMLA leave after completion of any previous FMLA leave year. The full text of the FMLA policy is contained in the "Employees' Guide to Leaves and Absences" available on the Guilford County Schools Web site.

## **Parental Leave**

All full-time permanent or part-time permanent employees may take a leave of absence without pay for up to twelve (12) calendar months to care for a newborn child, a newly adopted child or a child placed in foster care. **Guilford County Schools requires an employee to use available paid leave before taking leave without pay.**

Use of appropriate earned leave during the time of the leave (annual vacation leave, miscellaneous bonus leave, sick leave, extended sick leave, personal leave and voluntary shared leave) will not extend the 12-month period of parental leave to which the employee is entitled. However, the Board of Education may determine when the leave will begin or end, based on a consideration of the welfare of the students and the need for continuity of service.

Benefits under the Family and Medical Leave Act are available to eligible employees requesting Parental Leave. An employee may apply for a parental leave by completing the “Request for a Leave of Absence Form (form HUM-F001). The employee’s doctor must complete the “U.S. Department of Labor Form” (WH-380-E).

Please refer to the "Employees' Guide to Leaves and Absences" available on the Guilford County Schools Web site for more detailed information with respect to requesting a Parental Leave.

### **Military Leave**

The granting of military leave to full-time or part-time permanent employees is an obligation of the State to the defense effort of the nation and to the protection of the State itself. Generally, employees may be granted up to fifteen (15) days of leave with pay during the federal fiscal year for military training. An employee called to active duty will take leave without pay unless he/she chooses to use available annual leave. Important Note: The “Request for a Leave of Absence” (form HUM-F001) must be submitted to the Benefits Department for any amount of time away from the job due to military duties such as annual training, annual physical or active duty.

Public school employees, including charter school employees, on leave of absence for state or federal military duty under honorable service status, for required training, or for special emergency management service will be paid the difference in military base pay and public school salary, including non-performance based bonuses, when the military pay is less than the public school salary. The employee must request differential pay within 12 months from the date of separation or discharge.

All military leaves of absence will be administered in accordance with federal and state laws. Please refer to the "Employees' Guide to Leaves and Absences" available on the Guilford County Schools Web site for more detailed information with respect to requesting a Military Leave. (Reference: Public Schools of North Carolina Benefits and Employment Policy Manual, Section 10; Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act; Reference: Guilford County Schools Employee’s “Guide to Leave and Absences”; G. S. 115-C-302.1)

### **Medical Leave for Employee\***

All full-time permanent or part-time permanent employees may take a leave of absence without pay for up to twelve (12) calendar months in excess of sick leave provisions for personal illness or temporary disability that prevents an employee from performing his or her usual duties. Guilford County Schools requires an employee to use appropriate earned leave during the time of the leave (annual vacation leave, miscellaneous bonus leave, sick leave, extended sick leave, personal leave and voluntary shared leave). However, the Board of Education may determine when the leave will begin or end based on a consideration of the welfare of the students and the need for continuity of service. Benefits under the Family and Medical Leave Act are available to eligible employees requesting Medical Leave.

An employee may apply for a medical leave by completing the “Request for a Leave of Absence Form” (form HUM –F001). The employee’s doctor must complete the “U.S. Department of Labor Form” (WH-380-E). Please refer to the "Employees' Guide to Leaves and Absences" available on the

Guilford County Schools Web site for more detailed information with respect to requesting a Medical Leave.

*\*Employees who work less than four (4) hours per day are not considered part-time and are, therefore, ineligible for a medical leave. They must resign their position if they cannot work due to their own illness or that of a family member. However, employees who resign under these circumstances will be given consideration for rehire.*

### **Medical Leave to Care For Family\***

All full-time permanent or part-time permanent employees may take a leave of absence without pay for up to twelve (12) calendar months to care for the employee's **immediate** family member with a serious health condition. Guilford County Schools requires an employee to use appropriate earned leave during the time of the leave (sick leave, annual vacation leave, miscellaneous bonus leave, personal leave and voluntary shared leave). However, the Board of Education may also determine when the leave will begin or end, based on a consideration of the welfare of the students and the need for continuity of service.

Benefits under the Family and Medical Leave Act are available to eligible employees requesting Medical Leave to Care for Family. An employee may apply for a medical leave to care for an immediate family member by completing the Request for a "Leave of Absence Form" (form HUM – F001). The employee's immediate family member's doctor must complete the "U.S. Department of Labor Form" (WH-380-F). Please refer to the "Employees' Guide to Leaves and Absences" available on the Guilford County Schools Web site for more detailed information with respect to requesting a Medical Leave to Care for Family.

*\*Employees who work less than four (4) hours per day are not considered part-time and are, therefore, ineligible for a medical leave. They must resign their position if they cannot work due to their own illness or that of a family member. However, employees who resign under these circumstances will be given consideration for rehire.*

### **Military Caregiver Leave**

An employee who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin of a member of the Armed Forces can now take up to 26 weeks of job-protected unpaid leave in a single 12 month period to care for the service member or covered veteran undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious injury or illness sustained in the line of active duty. This applies to veterans if the veteran was on active duty within five (5) years of the date the veteran needs care. The leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary. An employee may apply for a Military Caregiver leave by completing the "Request for a Leave of Absence Form" (form HUM-F001). The service member's doctor must complete the "U.S. Department of Labor Form" (WH-380).

(Reference: NC Benefits and Employment Policy Manual)

### **Qualifying Exigency Leave**

An employee can take up to 12 weeks of job-protected unpaid leave in a 12-month period because of any "qualifying exigency" arising out of the fact that an employee's spouse, son, daughter or

parent has been notified of an impending call to covered active duty and has been deployed to a foreign country as a member of the Armed Forces. This applies to **any** member of the Armed Forces whether Reservists, National Guard or Regular Armed Forces.

Eligible employees may take qualifying exigency leave for any of the following reasons:

1. short term deployment
2. military events and related activities;
3. childcare and school activities;
4. financial and legal arrangements;
5. counseling;
6. rest and recuperation;
7. post-deployment activities;
8. additional activities; or
9. care for a military member's parent who is incapable of self-care when the care is necessitated by the member's covered active duty.

Eligible employees who request qualifying exigency leave to spend time with a military member on Rest and Recuperation leave may take up to fifteen days of leave. Supporting documentation may be needed for approval of leave. An employee may apply for a Qualifying Exigency leave by completing the "Request for a Leave of Absence (form HUM-F001) and form WH-384.

(Reference: NC Benefits and Employment Policy Manual)

### **Educational Leave**

Employees of Guilford County Schools, who are eligible to take a leave of absence and are enrolled as full-time students at college or university should make every effort to schedule their classes in so far as possible after their regular duty hours. If the employee has exhausted all measures and must schedule a class before the end of the work day the following options are available:

- A. In lieu of taking any professional days, a total of eighty (80) hours of release time may be taken for educational purposes. The employee should make a written request, including the class schedule, to his/her supervisor.
- B. If the employee must be absent for more than one hour any given day, a substitute is required. The cost of a one-half day substitute will be deducted from the employee's wages.
- C. Twelve-month employees enrolled in full-time summer school may use vacation time to account for the day(s) absent.
- D. Employees enrolled in internships will:
  1. Request placement in writing for fall semester by June 1 and placement for second semester by November 15 in conjunction with the college/university placement request.

2. Be governed by the number of hours to be served in the internship by the sponsoring college or university.
3. Present a proposal or plan, approved by the college or university, to the Executive Director of Human Resources for review. If the proposed plan cannot be accommodated during the school year in terms of before, during or after school hours, then the employee must secure a leave of absence from his/her position (full-time) to fulfill the internship requirement or request the Executive Director of Human Resources for placement in Guilford County Schools year-round summer programs, if appropriate placement is available.
4. Receive approval and be assigned to their current school/department or assigned to a different school/department by the Executive Director of Human Resources, after consulting with the principal/supervisor and the appropriate Executive Director.

E. Any approved request and schedule will be forwarded to the employee's personnel file.

To take an unpaid educational leave, an employee at least sixty (60) days in advance must: complete the "Request for Leave of Absence" form (HUM-F001), attach appropriate documentation, indicating a full-time registered student, and submit all documents to the Benefits Department. Once received, the employee will be contacted for an appointment with the appropriate Benefits Specialist.

Educational leave may be granted for full-time study as defined by an accredited college or university. The maximum length of an educational leave is one calendar year, except for employees participating in the North Carolina Principal Fellows' Program. Failure to request an educational leave sixty (60) days in advance in writing could result in denial of the leave. Please refer to the "Employees' Guide to Leaves and Absences" available on the Guilford County Schools Web site for more detailed information with respect to requesting an Educational Leave.  
(Reference: Board of Education Policy GBRL)

#### **Educational Leave for NCAE Officers**

As of July 1, 2013, educational leave for the purpose of serving as an officer in the NCAE must now meet the requirements of educational leave in order for the educational service to remain credited on their State Retirement System records.

Employees must complete the form for educational leave, and will also have to complete the employee portion of Form 463F "Requesting Continuation of Contributions and Credit for Planned Educational Leave" and submit it to the Benefits Office. The form will be forwarded to the State Retirement System by the Benefits Department. This form is required for each elected

term and will initiate notification of the amount the employee will need to contribute each month for retirement. Effective July 1, 2013, retirement will no longer be deducted from the monthly paycheck during service for the NCAE and the employee will need to pay the monthly retirement contribution to remain credited on the State Retirement System records. Payment must be paid via check to the Guilford County Schools Payroll department no later than the last business day of the month. The Payroll Department will remit the funds to the State Retirement System for the employee's benefit.

Leave is limited to no more than six years of educational leave (after July 1, 2013) over the career term. The employee must return to work for a school in the State Retirement System or state government within one year of the term's end for duration of at least three years (absent death or disability) at the end of the leave.

### **Professional Leave with Deduction**

All full-time or part-time permanent employees are eligible for professional leave. Permanent public school employees who have professional responsibilities, or who need to attend meetings of professional associations, may be absent with pay minus a salary deduction for substitute teachers. The deduction is mandatory whether or not a substitute is employed. Such absences must be approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee (usually the Principal at a school or designated administrative supervisor at other sites) and will be allowed for a period not exceeding three (3) successive days for in-state meetings and five (5) successive days for out-of-state meetings. Absences for this purpose may not exceed ten (10) days for the school year. The limitation will not apply to a person who is a local or district president or president-elect, state or national officer of a professional education, or a person selected as the National Teacher of the Year. The Office of the Deputy State Superintendent will upon request determine the eligibility of the professional association.

### **Professional Leave without Deduction**

Permanent public school employees attending meetings or performing duties as members of the State Board of Education, the State Textbook Commission, the Board of Governors of the Governor's Schools or required attendance at a case manager's hearing will receive full salary. Permanent public school employees completing assignments for, or serving on a commission or committee appointed by the Governor, the State Superintendent, the State Board of Education, or the General Assembly will receive full salary. Substitutes for these persons will be paid from the same funding source as the employee being replaced.

### **Officers of Professional Organizations**

Upon the recommendation of the local superintendent, local boards of education may grant leave with pay for elected officers of professional organizations, provided the organization pays the full salary and all benefit costs for the employee on leave. During such leave with pay, the employee will earn sick, personal and annual vacation leave and receive paid holidays. Employees will be eligible to use leave as they would when in active status with the school system.

## **Community Responsibility**

Upon approval of the supervisor, a full-time or part-time public school employee may be granted leave to represent the school or administrative unit at community functions such as the funeral of a school child or his parent. Absences of this type will qualify for full salary during the days absent. Proper provisions will be made for the continuation of the employee's regular work by making satisfactory arrangements within the system or by employment of a substitute. Substitutes employed for these absences will not be paid from state funds.

## **Jury Duty and Court Attendance**

**Jury Duty:** Full-time or part-time public school employees will retain full salary when absent from work to serve on a jury. The employee is entitled to regular compensation in addition to payment for jury duty.

**Court Attendance by Duty or Subpoena:** Full-time or part-time public school employees retain full salary for absences from school due to court attendance related to their official duty. The employee also will receive full salary when subpoenaed, except as noted in section (b). Out-of-state subpoenas are not binding on North Carolina residents, unless that state and North Carolina have an interstate subpoena agreement.

Any fees except travel reimbursement received by a school employee serving in an official capacity as a witness will be returned to the employing school administrative unit to be credited to the same fund from which the employee is paid. Substitutes employed for these absences will be paid from the same source of funds as the employee's salary (local, federal or state).

**Court Attendance for Personal Reasons:** Full-time or part-time public school employees who are absent for appearance in court as plaintiffs, defendants or witnesses for personal matters, even if subpoenaed, will not be entitled to receive any salary payment for those days, unless they are using appropriate earned leave. (Note: School personnel, who are responding to subpoenas for civic responsibilities such as a witness to a crime, are eligible for paid court attendance leave).

## **Elected Officials**

Full-time or part-time public school employees serving as elected government officials may, with their supervisor's approval, choose to use appropriate earned leave to attend to the responsibilities of their elected office.

## **Parental Involvement in Schools Leave**

**Eligibility and Rate of Earning:** In accordance with G.S. 95-28.3, any employee who is a parent, guardian or person in loco parentis may take up to four hours per fiscal year to attend or otherwise be involved at his or her child's school. There is no requirement that the employer pay an employee while taking this leave. However, the local school district may allow the employee to use eligible accrued leave in lieu of non-paid parental involvement leave. Leave granted for this purpose is subject to the following conditions:

1. The leave will be at a mutually agreed upon time between employer and employee,

2. The employer may require an employee to provide a written request at least 48 hours before the time desired for the leave, and
3. The employer may require that the employee furnish written verification from the child's school that the employee attended or was otherwise involved at the school during the time of leave.

**Definition of School:** For the purpose of this policy, "school" is defined as any:

- a. Public
- b. Private church school, church of religious charter, or nonpublic school that regularly provides a course of instruction,
- c. Preschool, or
- d. Child day care facility.

(Reference: G.S. 95-28.3)

# Exhibits

## Human Resources Contact List

The telephone numbers listed below are for your convenience, should you have questions regarding the subjects listed.

**Action Plans** | 336-370-8341

**Address Changes** | 336-370-8348

**Administrative Cohorts** | 336-370-8340

**Administrative Intern Placements** | 336-370-8341

**Administrative Interns** | 336-370-8341

**AESOP | Sub Office** | 336-378-8820

**Applications** | 336-370-8342

**Beginning Teacher Status** | 336-378-8806 or 336-370-8094

**Beneficiary Changes** | 336-370-8348

**Benefits** | 336-370-8348

**Coaches (non-faculty, paid volunteer)** | 336-370-8094

**Contract Administration** | 336-378-8806 or 336-370-8094

**Criminal Record Checks** | 336-378-8806  
- Substitutes | 336-378-0820

**Cumulative Effect** | 336-335-3294

**Death Claims** | 336-370-8348

**Disability** | 336-370-8166

**Employee Grievances** | 336-370-8341 or 336-378-8821

**Employee Records** | 336-370-8825

**Employee Relations** | 336-370-8341 or 336-378-8821

**Employment Verifications** (salary only, loans, social services) | 336-370-8348

**Exit Interviews (administrative)** | **336-378-8806**

**Exit Interviews (certified staff)** | **336-378-8806**

**Extended Employment Agreements** | 336-378-8806 or 336-370-8094

**GCS Act** | 336-378-8823

**Health and Wellness** | 336-370-8348

**Hiring** | 336-378-8806 or 336-370-8094

**Identification Badges** | 336-370-8348

**Insurance** | 336-370-8348

**Lateral Entry** | 336-378-8823

**Leaves of Absence** | 336-370-8166

**Legal (HR)** | 336-370-8341

**Licensure**

-**Lateral Entry** | 336-378-8823

-**Current Employees** | 336-378-8806

-**Other License Holders** | 336-370-8967

**Longevity** | 336-378-8806

**Mission Possible** | 336-279-4922

**Name Changes** | 336-370-8348

**NCEES** | 336-370-8341

**New Employee Orientation** | 336-378-8806 or 336-370-8094

**Principal of the Year** | 336-378-8821

**Recruitment** | 336-370-8319

**Renewal/Non-renewal** | 336-370-8094

**Resignation** | 336-370-8341

**Retirement** | 336-370-8348

**Salary Administration** | 336-370-8091 or 336-378-8822

**Salary Verification** (experience/prior service verifications) | 336-370-8348

See also *Employment Verifications*

**Staffing** | 336-370-8382 or 336-378-8806

**Substitutes** | 336-370-8382

**Student Teachers** | 336-370-8319

**Teacher of the Year** | 336-378-8821

**Transfers** | 336-370-8094

**Tutors** | 336-378-8806 or 336-370-8094

**Unemployment Compensation** | 336-370-8007

**Workers' Compensation** | 336-370-8351 or 336-370-8007



## Use of Personal Leave Chart

Calendar Days	Can Use Personal Leave without a Deduction?	Can Use Personal Leave With Deduction?	Can Use Annual Vacation Leave?
<i>Instructional Days</i>	No	Yes <sup>(1)</sup>	No, traditional school.  Yes, in extended year or year-round school only and with supervisor approval.
<i>Optional Workdays</i> <sup>(2)(3)(4)</sup>	Yes <sup>(1)(2)(3)(4)(5)</sup>	Yes <sup>(1)</sup>	Yes
<i>LEA Mandatory Workdays</i> <sup>(6)</sup>	No	No	No

**Notes:**

(1) In accordance with Section 5.1.2. – Benefits & Employment Policy Manual

- (a) Personal leave may be used only upon authorization of the immediate supervisor
- (b) Unless approved by the principal, a teacher shall not take personal leave on the first day teachers are required to report for the school year, on required teacher workdays, on days scheduled for State testing, on the last working day before or the next working day after holidays or annual vacation days scheduled in the calendar.
- (c) On all other days, if the request is made at least five days in advance, the request shall be automatically granted subject to the availability of a substitute teacher.
- (d) A teacher who requests personal leave at least five days in advance cannot be required to provide a reason.
- (e) Personal leave may be used on any instructional day or workday except as noted in (b) above.

- (2) *G.S. 115C-84.2.(a)(4) – To allow teachers to complete instructional and classroom administrative duties.*
- (3) *Optional Workdays – Workdays that may be designated as inclement weather make-up days, or otherwise not specified in 115C-84.2 and/or Section 7.29.(b) G.S. 115C-238.29F(d)(1). Teachers may use annual leave. Optional training and meetings may be scheduled; however, teacher attendance cannot be required.*
- (4) *5 of the 15 non-instructional days must be designated as days that teachers may take accumulated annual leave (optional workdays).*
- (5) *Limited to the accrued personal leave balance as of the leave date.*
- (6) *Workdays that the local board can designate as mandatory workdays; if not mandatory, optional workday provision applies.*
- (7) *Mandated Workdays – Teacher attendance is required for district or school-level professional development, planning meetings, grading, etc. Annual and personal leave may not be taken.*

## Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for North Carolina Educators

### **SECTION .0600 – CODE OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND CONDUCT FOR NORTH CAROLINA EDUCATORS**

#### **16 NCAC6C.0601 – THE PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY OF THE RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR EDUCATORS**

The purpose of these rules is to establish and uphold uniform standards of professional conduct for licensed professional educators throughout the State. These rules shall be binding on every person licensed by the SBE, hereinafter referred to as “educator” or “professional educator,” and the possible consequences of any willful breach shall include license suspension or revocation. The prohibition of certain conduct in these rules shall not be interpreted as approval of conduct not specifically cited.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 115C-295.3;  
Eff. April 1, 1998.*

#### **16 NCAC6C.0602 – THE STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR NC EDUCATORS**

(a) The standards listed in this Section shall be generally accepted for the education profession and shall be the basis for State Board review of performance of professional educators. These standards shall establish mandatory prohibitions and requirements for educators. Violation of these standards shall subject an educator to investigation and disciplinary action by the SBE or LEA.

(b) Professional educators shall adhere to the standards of professional conduct contained in this Rule. Any intentional act or omission that violates these standards is prohibited.

(1) Generally recognized professional standards. The educator shall practice the professional standards of federal, state, and local governing bodies.

(2) Personal conduct. The educator shall serve as a positive role model for students, parents and the community. Because the educator is entrusted with the care and education of small children and adolescents, the educator shall demonstrate a high standard of personal character and conduct.

(3) Honesty. The educator shall not engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation in the performance of professional duties including the following:

- (A) statement of professional qualifications;
- (B) application or recommendation for professional employment, promotion, or licensure;
- (C) application or recommendation for college or university admission, scholarship, grant, academic award, or similar benefit;
- (D) representation of completion of college or staff development credit;
- (E) evaluation or grading of students or personnel;

- (F) submission of financial or program compliance reports submitted to state, federal or other governmental agencies;
  - (G) submission of information in the course of an official inquiry by the employing LEA or the SBE related to facts of unprofessional conduct, provided however, that an educator shall be given adequate notice of the allegations and may be represented by legal counsel; and
  - (H) submission of information in the course of an investigation by a law enforcement agency, child protective services, or any other agency with the right to investigate regarding school-related criminal activity; provided, however, that an educator shall be entitled to decline to give evidence to law enforcement if such evidence may tend to incriminate the educator as that term is defined by the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.
- (4) Proper remunerative conduct. The educator shall not solicit current students or parents of students to purchase equipment, supplies or services from the educator in a private remunerative capacity. An educator shall not tutor for remuneration students currently assigned to the educator's classes, unless approved by the local superintendent. An educator shall not accept any compensation, benefit, or thing of value other than the educator's regular compensation for the performance of any service that the educator is required to render in the course and scope of the educator's employment. This Rule shall not restrict performance of any overtime or supplemental services at the request of the LEA; nor shall it apply to or restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens of minimal value offered and accepted openly from students, parents, or other persons in recognition or appreciation of service.
- (5) Conduct with students. The educator shall treat all students with respect. The educator shall not commit any abusive act or sexual exploitation with, to or in the presence of a student, whether or not that student is or has been under the care or supervision of that educator, as defined below:
- (A) any use of language that is considered profane, vulgar or demeaning;
  - (B) any sexual act;
  - (C) any solicitation of a sexual act, whether written, verbal or physical;
  - (D) any act of child abuse, as defined by law;
  - (E) any act of sexual harassment, as defined by law; and
  - (F) any intentional solicitation, encouragement or consummation of a romantic or physical relationship with a student, or any sexual contact with a student. The term "romantic relationship" shall include dating any student.
- (6) Confidential information. The educator shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information regarding students or their family members that has been obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure is required or permitted by law or professional standards, or is necessary for the personal safety of the student or others.
- (7) Rights of others. The educator shall not willfully or maliciously violate the constitutional or civil rights of a student, parent/legal guardian, or colleague.
- (8) Required reports. The educator shall make all reports required by Chapter 115C of the North Carolina General Statutes.
- (9) Alcohol or controlled substance abuse. The educator shall not:

- (A) be under the influence of, possess, use or consume on school premises or at a school-sponsored activity a controlled substance as defined by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 90-95, the Controlled Substances Act, without a prescription authorizing such use;
  - (B) be under the influence of, possess, use or consume an alcoholic beverage or a controlled substance on school premises or at a school-sponsored activity involving students; or
  - (C) furnish alcohol or a controlled substance to any student except as indicated in the professional duties of administering legally prescribed medications.
- (10) Compliance with criminal laws. The educator shall not commit any act referred to in G.S. 115C-332 and any felony under the laws of the United States or of any state.
- (11) Public funds and property. The educator shall not misuse public funds or property, funds of a school-related organization or colleague's funds. The educator shall account for funds collected from students, colleagues or parents/legal guardians. The educator shall not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses or pay.
- (12) Scope of professional practice. The educator shall not perform any act as an employee in a position for which licensure is required by the rules of the SBE or by Chapter 115C or the North Carolina General Statutes during any period in which the educator's license has been suspended or revoked.
- (13) Conduct related to ethical violations. The educator shall not directly or indirectly use or threaten to use any official authority or influence in any manner that tends to discourage, restrain, interfere with, coerce or discriminate against any subordinate or any licensee who in good faith reports, discloses, divulges or otherwise brings to the attention of an LEA, the SBE or any other public agency authorized to take remedial action, any facts or information relative to actual or suspected violation of any law regulating the duties of persons serving in the public school system, including but not limited to, these Rules.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 115C-295.3;  
Eff. May 1, 1998.*

We hope that this Handbook will serve as a useful instrument in your search for general information and a guide to specific policies and procedures when more details are needed. Any suggestions for improvement or changes may be forwarded to any committee member.

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