



COBB COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Employee Handbook



August 2016

Welcome to the Cobb County School District! You are now part of a team of individuals who demonstrate unrelenting commitment to our students, parents, educators, and community. By working together, we provide a quality education for all students.

The Cobb County School District is the second largest district in Georgia and among the 30 largest in the United States. Our student population of more than 100 thousand grows by the hundreds every year. As of summer 2016, we have 67 elementary schools, 25 middle schools, 16 high schools, and several other educational centers totaling 114 facilities.

As you become acquainted with our district, please know that we are here to support you. We see you as a valuable resource, because we recognize the tremendous difference you will make in the lives of our students.

This handbook contains important information about rules, policies, procedures, and resources of the Cobb County School District.

Please feel free to contact us if you need additional information. In the meantime, we hope you enjoy your experience working for the Cobb County School District.



Chris Ragsdale
Superintendent

Disclaimer

*This handbook has been prepared to help familiarize you with some of our administrative rules and forms and to present the information in a form that will be readily available for reference. Although the contents of the handbook are based on the administrative rules and forms of the Cobb County Board of Education, the actual administrative rules and forms, which are far more lengthy and detailed, have been summarized to make the handbook more readable. There are additional administrative rules and forms not discussed in the handbook. In the event of a conflict between the handbook and an administrative rule or form, the administrative rules or forms shall control. Nothing in this handbook or in the administrative rules and forms is intended to create a contract of employment or an entitlement to any particular benefits or terms and conditions of work. The Board of Education has the right to change or modify any of its administrative rules or forms at any time. For additional, more detailed information or if you have questions, please refer to the Board of Education Policy Manual, Section G - Personnel, which can be found at the District's web site (www.cobbk12.org), or contact the Human Resources Division at **Cobb County School District, 514 Glover Street Marietta, Georgia 30060. The telephone number for the Human Resources Division is 770-426-3300.***

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: This symbol refers to a Board of Education policy or an administrative rule of the Cobb County School District (CCSD). A complete copy of each policy and rule and supporting form, if any, can be found on the CCSD Web site at <http://www.cobbk12.org/centraloffice/adminrules/>

Rules and Guidelines: Workplace/On-the-Job

Accidents and Emergencies

All employees are responsible for maintaining a safe working environment, and should report safety concerns to their supervisor so that corrective action can be taken. In the event of an accident sustained in the performance of job duties, employees should report the injury to their supervisor as soon as possible and complete a Supervisor's Report of Injury with their supervisor. All Cobb County Schools have access to emergency services and resources.

Accreditation

All schools in the Cobb County School District are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the Georgia Accreditation Commission, Inc. In addition, the Cobb County School District has met the necessary standards of the Standards for Public Schools of Georgia, and declared to be a Standard System.

Alcohol and Controlled Substance Testing

The health and well-being of students and employees depends on the judgment, physical dexterity, reflex actions and unimpaired hearing and sight of all employees, including those engaged in safety sensitive functions. The Cobb County Board of Education will not tolerate and specifically prohibits the unauthorized use, abuse, possession or sale of alcohol or controlled substances, as well as a measurable presence of alcohol in any employee. Employees participate in an alcohol and controlled substance testing program that also provides training, education and other assistance.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: GAMA, GAMA-R, GCRA(1)-R

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Cobb County School District will not discriminate against any qualified employee because of a disability, as long as the employee can perform the essential functions of the job. Reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with a disability will be provided, following the ADA guidelines.

Attendance

Attendance is a part of performance, and employees are required to be at work, on time. Employees who will be late to work or absent should personally notify their supervisor in advance or as quickly as possible so that their responsibilities can be covered appropriately. Absences for reasons that are not approved by the Cobb County Board of Education may be considered job abandonment. Employee absences without approval for three or more days will be considered voluntary resignations.

Policy/Rule reference:: GARH-R

Confidential Nature of Work

Student and employee files, records, documentation and other information are private and confidential. Disclosure of such information is limited by applicable federal and state laws.

Conflict of Interest/Dual Pay

All employees are expected to adhere to the highest ethical standards of conduct at all times. While the Cobb County School District recognizes the right of employees to engage in private activities outside their employment with the school district, business dealings that create a conflict with the interests of the Cobb County School District are not acceptable. Employees should disclose any potential conflicts of interest, including those where the employee's influence could result in personal gain for the employee or an immediate family member. ☞ Policy/Rule reference: GAG-R

Employees who are paid for outside work they do during regular work hours must forfeit one of the salaries. Employees can be paid for outside work they do while on vacation leave, jury duty, or personal days, or for services performed outside the regular workday. ☞ Policy/Rule reference: GAGC-R, GBRG-R

Dress Code

Employees should maintain an appropriate level of personal hygiene, and dress appropriately for the school or workplace situation and level of formality. Employees should follow safety regulations concerning equipment.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: GBRL-R

Drug-Free Workplace

A drug-free workplace encourages productivity and helps accomplish the Cobb County School District mission and goals. The unlawful and/or unauthorized manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance and/or alcohol is prohibited in the workplace for all employees, students and visitors. In addition, the Cobb County School District will take appropriate personnel action against any employee convicted of a criminal drug offense. All employees are subject to drug and alcohol testing based on reasonable suspicion. ☞ Policy/Rule reference: GAMA-R

Employee Fund Drives

All fund-raising, product sales, and employee assistance campaigns must be approved by the Cobb County Board of Education.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: GAHA-R

Employees with Communicable Diseases

Employees who have or are suspected of having any communicable disease may be required to take any and all recommended precautions to ensure the health and safety of students and other employees. The Board of Education, the Cobb County Health Department, and/or the Georgia Department of Human Resources may require quarantine or surveillance of carriers of diseases and persons exposed to or suspected of being infected with infectious disease during such period until they are found free of the infectious agent or disease. 📖 Policy/Rule reference: GANA.

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)

All employees are entitled to equal treatment in decisions involving hiring, promotions, compensation, training, and discipline. The Cobb County School District does not consider race, color, sex (including pregnancy and related conditions), religion, national origin, military status, disability, or any other legally protected status in any employment decision or employment practice. Further, the Cobb County School District does not tolerate retaliation against employees for any legally-protected status or for engaging in legally-protected conduct. The District will consider requests for accommodation on the basis of religion, and will provide reasonable accommodation on the basis of ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) qualified disability if it can do so without undue hardship or safety threat. Also see Administrative Regulations, Superintendent's Statements, and EEO Procedures. Also see Responsibilities for Responses to Civil Rights Concerns. 📖 Policy/Rule reference: GAAA, GAAA-R

Ethics

All employees must adhere to the high standards and expectations determined by the Cobb County Board of Education and those described in the Professional Standards Commission Code of Ethics. As public employees expected to uphold the public trust, employees should not use their positions or professional relationships for personal gain. All employees of the District are required to notify their immediate supervisor or other administrator and the Employee Relations Office by the end of the next business day following any arrest. Any misstatement or omission of required information may be reason for dismissal or non-employment. All employees are required to cooperate with any investigation. 📖 Policy/Rule reference: GAGC-R

Identification Badges

All employees must clearly display their Cobb County School District -issued ID badge whenever they are on Cobb County School District property or engaged in Cobb County School District-related activities. Employees must report the loss or theft of ID badges to the Fingerprinting Office.

Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy

All employees have a right to be treated with respect and dignity, and to work in a professional environment that is free of bias, prejudice and harassment. The Cobb County School District prohibits harassment, discrimination, or differential treatment of any employee, and encourages employees who believe they have been discriminated against to seek relief through the Cobb County School District discrimination complaint resolution process. Also see Complaint Resolution. 📖 Policy/Rule reference: GAEB, GAEB-R.

Outside Employment

Outside employment is generally not permitted if; 1.) it interferes with the employee's ability to perform his/her job with Cobb County School District; 2.) the work involves organizations that do or want to do business with the school district; or 3.) it violates laws or Cobb County School District policies and regulations.

Responsibilities for Responses to Civil Rights Concerns

All employees are required to fully comply with all federal and state non-discrimination laws, including Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; the Age Discrimination and Employment Act (ADEA); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Public Law 101-476, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); and the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

Questions concerning these policies and procedures should be directed to the school Principal or to the following:

Facilities Accessibility	Director of Construction
Title VI,VII,IX, ADEA, Employee Issues, ADA, Personnel Issues, Section 504	Employee Relations
Title IX, Student Issues	Athletic Director
Title VI, Student Issues	Executive Director, Student Support
Student Program Accessibility; Section 504; ADA; Public Law 101-476 (IDEA)	Assistant Superintendent, Special Student Services

Employees may also contact the Director, Office of Civil Rights, Education Department, Washington, D.C. 20201

School Assignment for Children of Employees

A full-time employee may request that his/her child be assigned to his/her school or to a school in the feeder pattern of the employee's workplace, as long as that employee is the custodial parent or legal guardian and the child lives with the employee. The employee must provide transportation, if the school is outside the area of residence, and the child must comply with all eligibility rules, regulations and laws governing participation in extracurricular activities. Placement of special education students depends on availability of services and the approval of the Special Student Services division. ☞ Policy/Rule reference: JBCD-R

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unlawful and specifically prohibited. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature will not be tolerated. Examples of prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to, unwelcome intentional touching of intimate body areas; employees dating students; graphic or degrading comments about an individual or his/her appearance; the display of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cards or letters; lewd or suggestive comments or gestures; and off-color language or jokes of a sexual nature. ***Individuals who believe they are being sexually harassed should immediately notify a building or department administrator or Human Resources.*** Retaliation against a complainant for making a complaint is strictly forbidden. Also see Administrative Regulations, Superintendent's Statements, EEO Procedures and Complaint Resolution.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: GAEB, GAEB-R

Social Security Number

The Cobb County School District reserves the right to use an employee's social security number in employment-related practices. All employees who handle documents containing employee identification data such as social security numbers should use reasonable precaution to preclude compromise or identity theft.

Solicitation by Staff Members

Employees cannot solicit, advertise, or endorse one product over another product when dealing with students, parents or other employees. ☞ Policy/Rule reference: KJ-R

Solicitation on School Property

No person, firm, corporation or business can solicit money from or sell, trade or barter merchandise of any kind to students, employees and school clubs or organizations without the approval of the Cobb County Board of Education. The Board has approved the following activities: PTA and booster club activities held outside school hours, approved food service vendors, senior ring vendors, graduation paraphernalia vendors, school picture vendors, organizations that provide approved employee benefits, vendors who have merchandise that can be purchased out of local school funds and employee activities in compliance with Paragraph K of Regulation IFCB regarding non-school sponsored trips. ☞ Policy/Rule reference: KJ-R

Staff Complaints and Grievances

When workplace problems or disputes cannot be resolved informally, employees can turn to the Cobb County School District's internal grievance process. This process addresses alleged violations, misinterpretations or misapplications of the District's statutes, policies, rules, regulations or written agreements. It does not apply to performance ratings, job performance, termination, non-renewal, demotion, suspension and reprimands, or the revocation, suspension or denial of certification of any certified employee. The complaint must be sent in writing to the school ***Principal or Department/Division Supervisor*** within 10 calendar days of the event/incident.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: Certified Staff – GAE(2)-R; Classified Staff – GAE(3)-R

Tobacco-Free Schools

Tobacco use is a health hazard and inconsistent with the concepts and principles taught in the Cobb County School District. Employees and visitors are prohibited from using tobacco at all school-sponsored events and in/on all school property, including buildings, offices, trucks, automobiles, and buses. ☞ Policy/Rule reference: GAN, GAN-R

Use of Equipment and Resources

Employees entrusted with public funds and property should honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy and responsibility. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, misusing school-related funds or property; failing to account for funds collected from students or parents; and submitting fraudulent requests for reimbursement of expenses.

Computers

Cobb County School District computer hardware, software and data should be used for assigned responsibilities only, and should be protected from damage, destruction, viruses, theft and unauthorized access and use. Employees should have no expectation of privacy when using CCSD electronic resources.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: IFBGE, IFBG-R

Internet

Electronic resources should be used to support assigned responsibilities. Employees should have no expectation of privacy when using electronic systems, and should minimize use of the Internet for personal reasons during working hours. Employees should never access pornographic or other sites prohibited by law or CIPA (Children's Internet Protection Act) compliance during working hours or any other time when using CCSD electronic resources. ☞ Policy/Rule reference: IFBGE, IFBG-R

Telephone

Personal use of telephones should be kept to a minimum during working hours. Personal long-distance calls should not be charged to CCSD telephones or accounts.

Violence in the Workplace

The Cobb County School District strongly believes that all employees should be treated with dignity and respect. Acts of violence will not be tolerated. Any instance of violence must be reported to the employee's supervisor and/or Human Resources. All complaints will be fully investigated. The Cobb County School District will promptly respond to any incident or suggestion of violence.

Work Day/Work Week

Depending on the position, classified employees work a minimum of three hours a day and a maximum of 40 hours per week. Employees should check with their supervisor for their particular schedule.

The minimum work day for Teachers and other certified instructional staff is eight hours, and the minimum work week is 40 hours. Teachers work a minimum of seven and one-half hours each day, and spend another 30 minutes a day (or two and one-half hours a week) in parent conferences, planning conferences, teacher preparation, related school activities, extracurricular activities and staff meetings. The work day for Paraprofessionals is seven and one-half hours, and the work week is 37 and one-half hours. Paraprofessionals are compensated for additional time worked.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: GBRC

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Rules and Guidelines: Employment

Annual Performance Evaluation

All employees are evaluated by their immediate supervisor, using approved evaluation plans and procedures. All employees should receive a copy of their annual evaluation. All certified employees, including paraprofessionals, are evaluated by the deadline established by Human Resources. Classified employees are evaluated before June 30.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: GARI-R

Assignment

Employees are assigned to positions based on the needs of the Cobb County School District as well as the employee's training, certification and other factors.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: GARE-R

At-Will Employment

Georgia recognizes At-Will Employment; that is, an employee is hired at-will and employment can be terminated at the will of either party, for any reason or no reason at all. Employees who are issued Board-approved contracts do not have At-Will Employment.

Background Check

All new employees must pass a criminal background check as required by Georgia State Law. State law also requires employees to sign a consent form authorizing the District to conduct periodic criminal and/or driver's history record checks for the duration of employment. Policy/Rule: GAK(1)

Certification Qualifications and Duties

Certified employees must be eligible for certification before being employed and must maintain certification during employment. All coursework must be approved by the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) at www.gapsc.com.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: GBBA-R

Discipline

Discipline is necessary and will be implemented when there is unsatisfactory and/or unacceptable employee performance and/or conduct of any type. Depending on the nature or severity of the offense, Cobb County School District may provide employees with an opportunity to bring their performance up to standard through the use of the following: (1) immediate feedback regarding unsatisfactory performance, (2) factual documentation of performance, (3) employee input and commitment to improving performance, (4) final resolution of the performance issue(s), (5) Professional Development Plan, and/or (6) Progressive Discipline. The District utilizes progressive discipline in which disciplinary actions normally follow a gradually escalating path. However, depending on the seriousness of the offense, more than one Progressive Discipline Action may occur simultaneously or it may be determined that progressive discipline is not appropriate and any disciplinary action may be imposed. The action taken should be consistent with precedent in similar situations, appropriate to the offense, and documented. An employee who holds a certificate with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission may be reported at any time for a violation of the Code of Ethics for Educators. ☞ Policy/Rule reference: GBK-R

Fair Dismissal

According to the State of Georgia's Fair Dismissal Act [Act 20-2-940], Certified employees can be dismissed or suspended based on incompetence; insubordination; willful neglect of duties; immorality; inciting, encouraging or counseling students to violate state and local laws, regulations and ordinances, or policies and rules of the Cobb County Board of Education; failure to secure and maintain necessary educational training; to reduce staff due to the loss of students or programs; and any other good and sufficient cause. Suspensions are without pay and can last up to 60 days. The Cobb County School District Superintendent or his/her designee can relieve any employee from duty for up to 10 days if the employee's presence could cause serious harm or disrupt students, the school, or other employees. The Cobb County School District Superintendent or his/her designee may also write letters of reprimand for any valid reason. These letters are placed in the employee's District personnel file. Demotions and non-renewal of contracts of certain certified employees are governed by Code Section 20-2-942. A demotion is a job with less pay, less responsibility and less prestige. Transfers are not covered by the Fair Dismissal Act.

Hiring

Individuals are employed by the Cobb County Board of Education on the recommendation of the Superintendent. Human Resources will make the offer of employment on behalf of the Superintendent after the individual has successfully completed the required employment and screening process, although some post-employment screening or testing may be necessary.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: GARD

Interviewing

Human Resources and/or the Supervisor will interview the most qualified applicants for positions. Hiring decisions are made by the Board of Education; Human Resources will extend the offer of employment.

Job Abandonment

Absences for reasons that are not approved by the Cobb County Board of Education may be considered job abandonment. Employee absences without approval for three or more days will be considered voluntary resignations.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: GARH-R

Job Descriptions

Each position has a valid job description maintained by Human Resources. Job descriptions should be updated and maintained on a regular basis. Employees should see their supervisor regarding their job descriptions.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: GBB-R

Job Posting

Announcements of job vacancies will be posted electronically throughout Cobb County School District.

Nepotism

Employees cannot supervise or evaluate members of their immediate family.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: GARF-R

New Teacher Institute

Certified employees who did not teach in the Cobb County School District during the previous 24 months are issued employment contracts for 194 days. This contract includes days for orientation by the central office and local school.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: GBA-R

Personnel Records

Information contained in an employee's personnel file is not made public unless required by law or requested by the employee in writing. **It is the employee's responsibility to notify the District of any changes of personal information.**

Employees must notify their Supervisor, Human Resources, and the Payroll Department in Financial Services when their name and/or home address and/or contact numbers change. Forms are available from Human Resources and on the Financial Services intranet website.

Pre-Employment Physical Examinations

Prior to employment, employees may be asked to take physical and/or psychological examinations that demonstrate their competence and ability to perform job-related functions. The Cobb County School District will pay for the required examinations, but is not responsible for the cost of treatment. Employees in some job classifications (for example, those who operate vehicles that transport students) may be required by law to pass an annual physical or to acquire special permits.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: GARA-R

Professional Learning

Employees have the opportunity to participate in staff development activities that will enhance their professional capabilities. The Professional Learning department submits an annual comprehensive plan designed to address individual and instructional program needs for Certified employees. Professional opportunities for Classified employees are handled at the Division level. ☞ Policy/Rule reference: GAD

Reassignment

Employees may be reassigned at any time by the Cobb County School District. Some of the reasons for reassignments are reorganizations, changes in attendance zones, changes in approved programs, changes in student enrollment, and the opening or closing of schools. This list of reasons is not all inclusive.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: GARE-R

Recruitment

The Cobb County School District active recruitment process is designed to attract and retain competent and qualified personnel to work in the District. Job vacancy announcements are sent to the State Department of Education's Recruitment Services (www.teachgeorgia.org) and to media outlets in Cobb County. Announcements are also placed on the Cobb County School District website and advertised in newspapers, magazines, and professional journals. ☞ Policy/Rule reference: GARC-R

Reduction in Force (RIF)

A reduction in force may be caused by a number of factors, including reorganization, the elimination of or a change in programs or a loss of funding. If it becomes necessary to reduce the certified workforce, the Cobb County School District will rely on a process that maintains the effectiveness and quality of the educational programs and services, and that minimizes the number of employees who are negatively impacted.

The Superintendent will authorize a written plan that identifies the underlying conditions, as well as what positions are affected and why. Employees who receive written notice that their positions have been eliminated can choose to resign or accept separation under the RIF. 📖 Policy/Rule reference: GAKA-R

Re-Employment

The contracts for Administrative/Supervisory and Certified personnel are automatically considered for renewal each year. Individuals whose contracts will not be renewed are notified in writing. Administrative and Certified personnel who are employed after the contract year begins may be recommended for re-employment after April 15. 📖

Reference Checks

Personal and professional references are checked for each prospective employee.

Representation in Meetings

All employees shall be allowed to have an individual of their choosing, excluding attorney, spouses, and immediate family members (as defined in Administrative Rule GARH-R), present in any Disciplinary Conference. A Disciplinary Conference is described as any conference held, whether requested by the administrator/supervisor or the Employee, related to a Suspension without Pay, Demotion, Reprimand by the Superintendent, Termination, or Nonrenewal. Annual performance evaluation conferences are not considered Disciplinary Conferences.

📖 Policy/Rule reference: GBA-R

Resignations

Certified employees who want to terminate their contracts for the new contract year must submit written notification to their immediate supervisor and to Human Resources before June 1 of the current school year. Certified employees who want to resign during the contract period because of emergency situations should submit a statement of resignation at the earliest possible date. The contract cannot be terminated by the employee without the written consent of the Human Resources Division. Classified employees are asked to submit a letter of resignation at least two weeks prior to leaving the Cobb County School District. 📖 Policy/Rule reference: GAO-R

Retirement Membership

Teachers, Supervisors, Paraprofessionals, Administrators, Clerical, Campus Police Officers, and School Nurses who are employed one half-time or more are eligible and required to participate in the Teacher Retirement System of Georgia (TRS). Bus Drivers, Bus Monitors, Food Service Assistants, Custodians, and Maintenance Workers who work at least 60 percent of their normal work week, must establish membership in the Public School Employees Retirement System of Georgia (PSERS). Retirement contributions are payroll-deducted.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: GBA-R

Substitute Teachers

A substitute can be used for up to 10 days in the same classroom. A vacancy that lasts between 11 days and 60 days may be filled with a Supply Teacher. Substitute Teachers must attend in-service training and meet other requirements. ☞ Policy/Rule reference: GBRJ-R

Transfers

Employees may voluntarily initiate a transfer to another school or department if they meet transfer requirements. A teacher is eligible to apply for a transfer if she/he has been recommended for employment for the next school year and is not on limited contract. In addition, the teacher must meet one of the following:

- Is requesting a move from one level to another (i.e. elementary to middle)
- Has been at the present school for two years
- Was a designated reassignee this school year
- Is requesting a change in length of work day (i.e. full to half)
- Is requesting a change to a critical needs area
- Is requesting a move to a CCSD supplemented position
- Is requesting a move from a non-high priority school to a high priority school

Certified employees must submit applications for transfer between February 16 and May 28; transfers are finalized by May 30 and become effective with the new contract year. Classified employees may apply for a transfer at any time after they have served two consecutive years at the same work site. Administrators seeking a lateral transfer should contact the Leadership Management Office in Human Resources.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: GARF-R

Rules and Guidelines: Compensation

Contracts

Certified employees receive electronic employment contracts that are signed by the employee and the Superintendent. Contracts are terminated if an employee cannot be properly certified. The Cobb County Board of Education offers new contracts for the coming year to all certified employees on the payroll at the beginning of the current year, except those who have resigned, been terminated or notified in writing that their contract will not be renewed. All employees must have an Oath of Allegiance on file.

Deductions

Payroll deductions include, but are not limited to, federal and state taxes required by law; retirement systems contributions; Social Security; and medical, dental and other deductions authorized by the employee. ☞ Policy/Rule reference: GBA-R

Direct Deposit

All employees are required to participate in Direct Deposit for payroll checks.

Extended Day/Year

Supplemental pay may be provided to employees who work an extended school day or school year to meet program responsibilities or student needs. For example, some High School Teachers may be asked to work an additional hour beyond the normal eight-hour day to provide student instructional services or to teach an additional period of instruction. Local school administrators must approve Extended Day/Year pay because of student and school needs; such pay cannot be based on tasks that would normally be performed during the regular work day.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: GBA-R

Holiday Pay for Hourly Employees

In order to be paid an hourly holiday premium for working on a scheduled holiday, an hourly employee working a 260-day work schedule must work the workday before and the workday after said holiday or be on approved paid vacation, personal or acceptable short-term leave for personal or family illness or bereavement purposes. Hourly employees on a 260-day schedule who do not qualify for the holiday premium will be paid 1-1/2 times their regular rate for work on a holiday.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: GBA-R

Overtime

Overtime is defined as those hours worked by a public employee who qualifies for time-and-one-half overtime pay or time-and-one-half compensatory time as required by the Fair Labor Standards Act. Overtime for Cobb County School District non-exempt employees refers to those hours or major fractions of hours beyond 40 hours within a work week. For non-exempt employees who are paid bi-weekly, the week begins at 12:01 a.m. on Thursday and ends at 12 midnight on Wednesday. For non-exempt employees paid monthly, the work week begins at 12:01 a.m. on Monday and ends at 12 midnight on Sunday.

Employees classified under The Fair Labor Standards Act as non-exempt are compensated at a rate of one and one-half times their hourly rate after 40 hours within a work week and/or one-and-one half hours of compensatory time off for each hour over 40 hours within a workweek. Overtime for non-exempt employees must be approved in advance by their supervisor (except in emergency situations). Unauthorized (unapproved) overtime worked may subject the employee to disciplinary action. Non-exempt employees cannot waive their rights to overtime pay or volunteer to perform normal job functions outside normal work hours. As a general rule, employees may only bank 32 hours of compensatory time during any pay period. Hours that exceed 32 hours should be reported to the supervisor immediately.

Employees classified under the Fair Labor Standards Act as exempt are paid a fixed rate and are not eligible for overtime pay. 📄 Policy/Rule reference: GCRD-R

Pay for Supervising Student Teachers

Colleges and universities may choose to pay certified employees who supervise and evaluate their student teachers. To be eligible, the Teacher must hold a valid Georgia certificate in the student teacher's practice field; meet all requirements established by the college or university; demonstrate successful teaching experience; and have the approval of the Principal and Central Office Administrator.

📄 Policy/Rule reference: GBA-R

Pay Schedule

Certified employees are paid monthly. Certified employees who begin work after the beginning of the contract year are paid an equal monthly percentage of their salary through the end of July which is calculated by using an employee's first and last day of work for the school year. Classified employees are paid monthly or bi-weekly, based on their job assignment. 📄 Policy/Rule reference: GBA-R

Salary

Salaries for Certified employees are determined by the Georgia teaching certificate they hold and the years of experience approved by the Cobb County Board of Education. Classified employees are paid based on years of like experience related to their current classification and education level. ☞ Policy/Rule reference: GBA-R

Teaching Experience

Certificated employees new to the District will be placed at step one of the appropriate salary and certification level. Upon receipt of verified experience and a valid in-field certificate, the salary will be appropriately adjusted. Teaching experience gained outside the District in an accredited, Georgia-recognized program will be credited year for year. The daily rate of pay for certified employees can be adjusted if the District determines that an employee's initial certification status has changed.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: GBA-R

Travel Reimbursement

Personal expenses associated with Cobb County School District approved travel will be reimbursed at the approved District travel rates. Signed receipts of expenses must accompany reimbursement requests.

Tutoring for Pay

Employees must have the approval of the Cobb County Board of Education before they can be paid to tutor students assigned to them. With their supervisor's approval, employees can use Cobb County School District facilities, materials or equipment when tutoring students for pay in a school-administered program. Private tutoring for pay must be done off-campus and must not include students assigned to the teacher.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: GBRGB-R

Unsatisfactory Annual Evaluation

The District shall withhold a step increase for any employee who receives an unsatisfactory annual evaluation. Unsatisfactory performance ratings include any annual summative performance rating of "Unsatisfactory." Or, "ineffective" (TKES/LKES Level 1), "Needs Development" (TKES/LKES Level 2), or the equivalent. If the employee is on a step plateau at the time the step increase is withheld, that employee will remain on the step plateau an additional year. Employees may utilize the performance evaluation appeal process within ten days of their annual evaluation if desired.

☞ Policy/Rule reference: GBA-R (9)

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Rules and Guidelines: Benefits

Your employee benefits can be a very important part of the total employment package you receive as an employee – and may add an additional 30% of your salary to your total compensation from the district. Like your personal auto and homeowners insurance, the insurance products offered to CCSD employees are designed to protect you and your family members “when life happens”. The retirement and supplemental plans are provided to help you prepare for your future. As a school district, several of the benefits we offer are developed and administered by the State of Georgia and rules are set in state law. The other benefits options are designed by CCSD with assistance from our broker/consultant and contracted with various insurance companies and other providers.

The benefits information provided in this Employee Handbook is a simple summary of the benefits that may be available to you and how they work. Please visit www.mycobbbenefits.com for more information. However, the insurance policies, plan documents, and state regulations for each benefit are the only documents with accurate, specific and binding information about the actual details of the plan. These benefits are subject to change at any time. Nothing in this section of the Employee Handbook creates or implies a contract of employment or an entitlement to any particular benefit.

Benefit Eligibility

Benefits coverage is available to employees, the employee’s legal spouse under Georgia law, and the employee’s natural children, adopted children, step-children, children in the employee’s legal custody, and those children for whom the employee has a legal requirement to provide coverage. Children can be covered until the end of the month during which they turn 26 years of age. Children who are disabled by the 26th birthday may continue on coverage with proper documentation of the disability.

Effective Dates of Deductions and Coverage

Benefits coverage starts on the first of the month following or coincident with one month of employment. Deductions are taken “in advance”, so deductions will start with the paycheck(s) for the month before coverage starts. However, deductions for the Flexible Spending Accounts are “current” for the month during which they are deducted. Many benefits deductions are taken on a pre-tax basis. If you miss a paycheck due to being on leave without pay or other reasons, you must make payment directly to the Benefits Office or your coverage will be terminated. For employees hired after payroll cut off dates, deductions for premiums missed will be seen on the next month’s paycheck in the form of arrears (ARS).

Enrollment

Employees may enroll in benefits upon employment, during the annual Open Enrollment period for the following year, or at the time of a Qualifying Event. Paper forms or online enrollments should be completed and received in the Benefits Office within 20 days of employment or the Qualifying Event so changes can be forwarded to the insurance companies by the 31-day deadline. Certain benefits or levels of coverage will require that you complete a personal health questionnaire and be approved by the insurance company before coverage and deductions will begin. All eligible employees should participate in the Open Enrollment process each year to learn about new benefits options or changes. Open Enrollment typically begins in October each year.

Qualifying Events are those changes in family status that the Internal Revenue Service recognizes making you eligible to change your benefits elections for the year.

Qualifying Events include your marriage or divorce, the birth or adoption of a child, and your or your spouse’s change in employment status that affects benefits eligibility (including your spouse’s Open Enrollment period).

Benefit Options

Eligible employees may participate in the State Health Benefit Plan for health coverage. CCSD pays the premiums for Basic Life insurance and Long Term Disability insurance for all eligible employees. Employees may purchase Supplemental Life insurance on themselves and family members, Dental insurance, Vision Care insurance, Short Term Disability insurance, Legal Services coverage, Cancer insurance, and Critical Illness insurance. Employees may also make pre-tax deferrals to Flexible Spending Accounts for medical expenses and dependent care expenses. The providers of these products, the levels of coverage, and terms and conditions of coverage are subject to change. Employees receive notification of such changes, normally during the Open Enrollment period each year.

Retirement Plans

All eligible employees are required to participate in one of the state-provided retirement plans. New hires who are over 60 years of age upon employment may choose to not participate. The primary plans (TRS and PSERS) are defined benefit pension plans, meaning that your retirement benefit is defined in the plan materials and your contribution combined with CCSD's contribution will fully fund your retirement benefit.

Teachers Retirement System (TRS) of Georgia – All regular employees who work at least half time in their position are required to participate in TRS. A portion of your salary will be contributed to the plan each payday. Covered positions include Teachers, Paraprofessionals, Administrators, Nurses, Clerical Staff, and Campus Police Officers. Refer to the guidelines and regulations at www.trsga.com

Public School Employees Retirement System (PSERS) of Georgia – All other non-temporary employees of the school district who are not eligible for TRS will participate in PSERS. Covered positions include non-supervisory positions in the Maintenance and Food Services departments, custodial employees, bus drivers and bus monitors, among others. Refer to the guidelines and regulations at www.ers.ga.gov

CCSD Supplemental Retirement Plan for PSERS Participants – Employees who are covered by PSERS are eligible to participate in this supplemental defined contribution plan. If the employee contributes 1% of salary to the 403b plan administered by VALIC, s/he will receive a contribution equal to 2% of salary each month to match. Please see plan information booklets for more detail.

Employees Retirement System (ERS) of Georgia – Employees who transfer to CCSD from a position that is covered by ERS and who are already vested in ERS, may continue their participation in ERS rather than joining TRS or PSERS. Again, information is available at www.ers.ga.gov.

403(b) and 457 Supplemental Plans

The district offers pre-tax deferral to annuity plans under these sections of the Internal Revenue Code. These are supplemental retirement plans, so the funds are not readily or easily available until retirement. All regular employees and temporary employees who work at least 20 hours per week are eligible to participate.

Benefits Disclaimer

There are additional requirements and conditions for benefit plans not discussed in this handbook. In the event of a conflict between the handbook and a requirement and condition, the Plan Description will prevail. Nothing in this section of the handbook creates a contract or an entitlement to any particular benefits. Benefits are subject to change at any time. Refer to the CCSD Benefits Book for details or visit the CCSD Benefits website at <http://www.cobbk12.org/centraloffice/hr/benefits/> for additional information.

Rules and Guidelines: Attendance and Absences

Attendance

Daily attendance and punctuality are performance expectations for all employees and are included in each job description as a primary responsibility. In the event that absence is necessary, employees are responsible for contacting their supervisor prior to the start of the workday. The specific call-in protocol for each school or department will be discussed and provided in writing to all employees. Employees are expected to call-in for each day of absence unless they are otherwise notified by their supervisor, or unless they are placed on an approved leave of absence. Employees who are excessively absent are subject to disciplinary action up to and including the recommendation to terminate employment.

Sick Leave

Sick Leave is provided under Georgia law so employees can receive pay during absences related to medical issues for the employee or an immediate family member, as well as for certain other absences. Sick Leave is accrued at 1 ¼ days per working month, provided that at least half the scheduled work days of the month are worked. New employees who do not transfer any Sick Leave time to the district will be advanced five (5) days of leave. Due to this advance, the new employee earns no additional Sick Leave until the end of the fourth month of service. The maximum accrual is 120 days of sick leave. Employees are not paid for unused sick leave when they separate from employment. Details about Sick Leave can be found in Administrative Rule GARH-R.

Personal Leave

Georgia law allows school district employees to use up to three days of accrued, unused Sick Leave each school year to receive pay during absences due to personal reasons. CCSD further allows employees with 15 or more years of service one additional day each school year. Advance approval of this Personal Leave is required except in emergency situations. Personal Leave will not be approved for Critical Days as designated by the district or the school at the beginning of each school year. More information is available in Administrative Rule GARH-R.

Bereavement Leave

Georgia law allows school district employees to use accrued, unused Sick Leave as Bereavement Leave to receive pay for up to five days away from work due to the death of an immediate family member or a relative living at the same address. Employees may use up to one day per year to be away from work due to the death of someone outside the immediate family. More information is available in Administrative Rule GARH-R.

Hardship Leave

Hardship requests may be made by employees who have accumulated sick leave when the need to attend to a family member's illness continues for more than 5 consecutive days or when bereavement leave of more than 5 days is necessary. Medical documentation must accompany the Approval form for family illness. Documentation of the reason(s) for extended bereavement leave must be provided for those requests. Employees can be approved for a maximum total of 45 days of sick leave use for absence due to the illness of a family member or a total of 20 days for bereavement. More information is available in Administrative Rule GARH-R.

Vacation

Employees who work a 12-month schedule accrue vacation hours to cover their pay for scheduled absences. At least half of accrued vacation time must be used each fiscal year. Unused vacation hours can be accumulated, up to a total of four times the annual accrual. Employees who resign, retire or move to a non-eligible position will be paid for accumulated but unused vacation hours. Other rules and requirements are included in Administrative Rule GARK-R.

Military Leave

Employees who are members of the National Guard or Reserves may be granted up to 18 days of paid leave each federal fiscal year for training or active duty. Documentation of the duty and dates of service must be provided in advance. More information is available in Administrative Rule GARH-R.

Jury and Witness Duty

Employees will receive regular pay when absent due to a jury duty summons. Employees who are subpoenaed as a witness and who have no direct personal interest in the legal proceedings will be allowed to be absent and will receive regular pay. More information is available in Administrative Rule GARH-R.

Time for Voting

Polls in Georgia are open from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m., and often advance voting is allowed before the day of elections. Therefore, it is unlikely that time away from work would be necessary for an employee to vote. Employees should consult their supervisor to arrange for time off when necessary. More information is available in Administrative Rule GARH-R.

Professional Leave

Employees who attend a conference, seminar or workshop at the direction of the district are considered to be absent for professional development purposes. This Professional Leave is not deducted from any of the employee's leave accounts as it is considered worked time. More information is available in Administrative Rule GARH-R.

Administrative or Directed Leave

During investigations or other situations, the district may direct that an employee remain off work. This administratively required leave will be paid at the employee's regular rate of pay. State law must be followed concerning administrative leave for certificated employees. More information is available in Administrative Rule GARH-R.

Rules and Guidelines: Leaves of Absence

Leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Employees are eligible for a leave of absence under the FMLA once they have worked for the district for twelve months and a total of 1250 work hours. Leave under the FMLA can be approved for up to 12 weeks in a rolling 12-month period for the following reasons:

- a. For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care, or childbirth;
- b. To care for the employee's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care; entitlement to leave for a birth or placement of a child expires at the end of the 12-month period beginning on the date of the birth or placement;
- c. To care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent who has a serious health condition;
- d. For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of his/her job; and
- e. For a qualifying exigency leave arising out of the fact that the eligible employee's spouse, child, or parent is a covered military member on active duty or called to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation.

Absences covered by Workers' Compensation are considered to be FMLA leaves of absence. See Administrative Rule GBRIG-R for more information.

Extended Leave of Absence

When the following conditions are met, an employee on an approved leave of absence may remain on an Extended Leave of Absence:

- a. The employee has remaining sick leave available at the end of the FMLA period; and
- b. The Leave is for personal medical reasons and the employee remains disabled beyond the FMLA period.

In this case, the employee may remain on Extended Leave until all available Sick Leave is exhausted. Employees whose absence is covered by Workers' Compensation and who are unable to return to work at the end of the FMLA period are also considered to be on Extended Leave. See Administrative Rule GARH-R for details.

Other Medical Leave

Employees who deliver a baby during the first twelve months of employment will be allowed to take a leave of absence for the period of disability after delivery (normally six to eight weeks). See Administrative Rule GARH-R for details.

Military Caregiver Leave of Absence

An eligible employee is entitled to 26 workweeks of leave during a single 12-month period to care for a family member with a serious injury or illness related to certain types of military service. The family member must be a covered service member. The employee must be the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or "next of kin" of the covered service member. See Administrative Rule GBRIG-R for more details.

Benefits Deductions during a Leave of Absence

While an employee receives Sick Leave pay, benefits deductions continue to be taken from the pay check. If the employee uses all available Sick Leave before the end of the FMLA period or if the employee is receiving payments from Workers Compensation (see the next section of the Handbook), s/he may choose whether to continue paying for benefits deductions directly to the Benefits Office each month or to allow benefits coverage to lapse for the remainder of the leave of absence. In the event coverage lapses, deductions and coverage cannot begin again until the employee returns to work. Some benefits have a "waiver of premium" so the employee does not have to pay the deduction after an extended period of disability. Contact the Benefits Office for more information and see Administrative Rule GBRIG-R.

Return to Work


Employees are expected to return to work at the end of the FMLA period or the Extended Leave with a full release to perform all duties. The employee will return to the same position and work location as prior to the leave of absence in most circumstances. If the employee is unable to return to work, s/he may resign and maintain eligibility for re-employment in the future. See Administrative Rules GARH-R and GBRIG-R for more details.

Employees who are unable to return to work at the end of the approved leave of absence will resign and are eligible for employment when they are cleared to work by the physician.

Rules and Guidelines: Risk Management

Workers' Compensation

Employees are entitled to workers' compensation benefits for payment of medical treatment and wage loss of compensable on the job injuries. Employees must treat with a physician listed on the District's Panel of Physicians. A Traditional Panel of Physicians is posted in common areas e.g. break rooms, meeting areas for employees etc. If an employee sustains an on the job injury they are required to provide immediate notification to their supervisor or member of their department administrative staff. Delay in notification can result in denial of the workers' compensation claim. A completed Supervisor's Report of Injury should be sent to Risk Management within 48 hours of the accident.

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APPENDIX 1: Key Terms and Definitions

Annual: Employment year or schedule.

Annual Employee: An employee who works 240 days per school year.

Annual Hourly Employee: An employee who works 260 days per school year.

Break in Service: An interruption in continuous service in a full-time position. Examples of a break in service include resignation, retirement, failure to return from approved long-term leave of absence and termination. A break in service also interrupts an employee's school system seniority. School system seniority begins to accrue again on the date the employee begins the current continuous service period in a full-time position.

CCSD: Cobb County School District

Certified: Employees who must hold a teaching, educational leadership or service certificate, issued by the Professional Standards Commission. Certified employees include Principals, Associate Principals, Assistant Principals, Assistant Administrators, Teachers, Guidance Counselors, Media Specialists, Curriculum Supervisors and Teachers-on-Special-Assignment.

Classified: Employees who are not required to hold a teaching, educational leadership or service state certificate. Classified employees include Central Office Administrators, Technical and Professional employees, Clerical employees, Paraprofessionals, Food Service Workers, Public Health Nurses, Custodial and Maintenance Workers and Transportation Employees.

Compensatory Time: As a public employer, the Cobb County School District may pay overtime with "time off" instead of cash.

Contract: The Cobb County Board of Education issues a contract for all Certified employees and other Board-approved personnel. Contracts should be in writing and signed by the employee and the Superintendent. New Certified employees are issued a temporary contract, pending results from the criminal background check. All employees are evaluated at least annually. Continued employment depends on satisfactory work performance, maintaining qualifications and established need for the position.

Covered Positions: Teachers, administrators, supervisors, campus officers, clerks, teacher aides, secretaries, paraprofessionals, and public school nurses are considered covered positions by the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia (TRSGA).

Critical Days: Employees are not able to take personal/professional leave on certain days during the school year. The Human Resources website has a list of these days. Additional critical days may be designated by the principal as needed.

Exempt Employee: Employees classified under The Fair Labor Standards Act as exempt are paid a fixed salary regardless of the time required to complete duties. Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime pay.

Full-Time Position: Regular, full-time employees work at least a fixed 37.5 hour work week. Each regular, full-time employee is allotted in the District's budget. Under the applicable regulations in effect as of 2008, regular full-time employees generally are eligible to elect to participate in one of the health insurance programs offered through the State Health Benefit Plan. Further, under the current local benefits plan in effect as of 2008, regular full-time employees generally are eligible to elect to participate in the dental, vision, short-term disability, and long-term disability coverage available through the District.

Hourly Employee: An employee who is paid an hourly rate for services rendered.

Itinerant Teacher: Teachers who have responsibilities at more than one school.

Less Than Annual Employee: An employee who works less than seven and one half hours a day AND fewer than 240 days per year.

Less Than Part-Time Employee: Employees who work a 49 percent or less schedule or by the percent of the day worked.

Limited Contract: Contract offered to a Certified Teacher whose first day of work is after the first day of pre-planning. Teachers on a Limited Contract are not afforded due process under the Fair Dismissal Act.

New Hire: A new, first-time employee in a full-time position.

Non-Exempt Employee: Employees classified under The Fair Labor Standards Act as non-exempt are compensated overtime pay or compensatory time off for all hours worked that exceed 40 hours within a work week. All non-exempt employees who work more than 40 hours a week will be compensated for overtime work at one and one-half times their regular hourly rate.

Work that extends outside an employee's regular schedule must be approved in advance by his/her supervisor (except in emergency situations); non-exempt employees cannot waive their rights to overtime pay or volunteer to perform normal job functions outside normal work hours.

Non-Renewal: When an employee, holding a position that is covered by a contract, is not offered a contract for the next school year period.

Paraprofessionals: Paraprofessionals work with individuals or groups of students under the direction of classroom Teachers or other Certified employees. Paraprofessionals must meet initial and ongoing requirements for in-service training for continued employment.

Part-Time Employee: Regular, part-time employees generally work a fixed less-than-37.5 hour work week per fiscal year. A regular part-time employee may, or may not, be eligible to elect to participate in the State Health Benefit Plan and the local benefits plans, depending upon the number of hours scheduled to work and based exclusively on the terms and conditions set forth in the applicable plans, statutes, and/or regulations.

Reassignee: Any employee who is involuntarily assigned from one work site to another in the same or a comparable position.

Re-Elected: Refers to a Certified Teacher who has fulfilled a limited contract and is offered employment on a regular contract.

Re-Hire: A former employee who was separated from Cobb County School District and has reentered the Cobb County School District workforce.

Regular Contract: Contract offered to a Certified Teacher whose first day of work is on or before the first day of preplanning.

Semester Contract: Contract offered to a Certified Teacher for one semester only. Teachers on semester contracts are not afforded due process under the Fair Dismissal Act.

Seniority (System): Term used to define the length of full-time continuous employment; determines the priority of employees during personnel activities such as transfers, reassignments, Reduction in Force (RIF). In practice, the last employee hired has the least seniority.

Supply Teacher: A long term substitute teacher who is employed when a Teacher is absent on short-term leave. Supply Teachers are employed not later than the 11th day of the regular Teacher's absence. A Supply position can last no more than 60 working days. After that, the position may change to a Limited Contract.

Temporary Employee: Temporary employees may work up to 40 hours per week on a fixed or non-fixed schedule for a finite period of time (typically 90 days or less). Temporary employees are generally not eligible for benefits. Temporary employees are not allotted in the District's budget.

Transfer: Any employee who voluntarily moves from one work site to another in the same or a comparable position. The employee must request the movement and be accepted by the Principal, Supervisor or Administrator.

APPENDIX 2: Contact Information

Please refer to the following web sites for additional information.

Human Resources - <http://www.cobbk12.org/centraloffice/hr/>

Benefits - <http://www.cobbk12.org/centraloffice/hr/benefits/>

Certification/Licensing - <http://www.cobbk12.org/centraloffice/hr/compensation>


Compensation - <http://www.cobbk12.org/centraloffice/hr/compensation/>

Risk Management - <http://www.cobbk12.org/centraloffice/hr/risk>

Employment - <http://www.cobbk12.org/centraloffice/hr/employment/>

Leadership Mgmt.- [http://www.cobbk12.org/centraloffice/hr/leadershipmanagement/ /](http://www.cobbk12.org/centraloffice/hr/leadershipmanagement/)

Employee Relations - <http://www.cobbk12.org/centraloffice/hr/ethics/>

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**Cobb County School District
Board of Education**

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Our Vision

“One Team, One Goal: Student Success”

Our Mission

“Creating and Supporting Pathways for Success.”



*Cobb County School District
514 Glover Street
Marietta, GA 30060
770-426-3300
www.cobbk12.org*