

**2013-2014**

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**Fulton County School System  
Employee Handbook**

## **Fulton County School System Mission**

Our Mission is to educate every student  
to be a responsible, productive citizen.

## **Fulton County School System Vision**

Our vision is for all students to learn to their fullest potential.

### **We Believe In**

Excellence  
Trust and Honest Communication  
Common Understanding  
Personal Responsibility  
Commitment  
Academic Achievement  
Measured Results  
Continuous Improvement  
Safe and nurturing environment  
Involved staff, family and community  
Transparency and Accountability

### **Value Statements**

- Fulton County schools will prepare each student to excel in a rapidly changing global society.
- Each Fulton County school will educate every student to his/her fullest potential.
- Each Fulton County school will be the preferred school for its students and parents.
- Each Fulton County school will provide greater value for each child's educational experience when compared to top-performing public and private schools in the nation.
- Fulton County will engage parents as key partners in the educational process.

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*The information in this guide does not create or amend any contract of employment. Changes made in Board policy subsequent to the distribution of this handbook take priority.*

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## Fulton County School System Employee Handbook

### GENERAL INFORMATION

#### **Purpose**

This guide is designed to answer frequently asked questions concerning policies, procedures, benefits, services, work rules and other areas of concern to employees. While it is intended to be as comprehensive as possible, it cannot cover every situation. As a condition of employment, all district employees are expected to be aware/knowledgeable of all Fulton County Board of Education Policies and Administrative Procedures. These policies/procedures can be accessed from the Fulton County web site: [www.fultonschools.org](http://www.fultonschools.org), under the School Board section. The information in this guide does not create or amend any contract of employment. Employees who do not receive an employment contract are considered “at-will”. Employment-at-will means that, in general, an employer may terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any reason, or for no reason, unless an agreement or law exists to the contrary. The Board has the right to adopt new policies and procedures and to modify, amend or eliminate any of its existing policies or procedures. Currently, the Board of Education is undergoing a comprehensive review of all policies. Any changes will take priority over the information stated in this guide even if the changes have not been reprinted or substituted into the guidebook. Local schools may institute additional procedures relating to normal school operations, but those may not conflict with Board Policy or items specified in this handbook.

#### **Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination**

The Fulton County Board of Education is an equal opportunity employer. The school system does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or disability in any employment opportunity practices, educational programs or activities. Supervisors and department heads must base all employment-related decisions and recommendations on merit. The system and each of its departments will make a determined effort to recruit, employ and promote the most qualified persons, including those who are members of minority groups.

*Reference: Policy GAAA, GAB*

#### **Fulton County School System – At a Glance**

The Fulton County School System is unique. Though not Georgia's largest school system in terms of student enrollment, it is, however, one of the largest systems in geographic area. From its southern end in the City of Chattahoochee Hills to its northernmost tip in Johns Creek, the county is more than 70 miles long. What is known as present-day Fulton County was formed by the 1932 consolidation of the former Campbell and Milton counties, making Fulton the size of three counties.

To add to Fulton's uniqueness, the City of Atlanta has long had its own school system and its own Board of Education. The result is that the Fulton County School System is physically bisected by the City of Atlanta and its school system. While this wedge often leads to references of north Fulton and south Fulton, there is only one Fulton County School System.

The southern part of Fulton County is comprised of the cities of Chattahoochee Hills, College Park, East Point, Fairburn, Hapeville, Palmetto and Union City. The northern part is home to the cities of Alpharetta, Johns Creek, Milton, Mountain Park, Roswell and Sandy Springs.

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Currently the fourth largest school system in Georgia, Fulton has approximately 12,000 full-time employees, including 7,000 teachers and other certified personnel, who work in 100 schools and 15 administrative and support buildings. During the 2010-11 school year, more than 91,000 students will attend classes in 59 elementary schools, 19 middle schools, 16 high schools (includes two open campus high schools) and six charter schools.

As the Atlanta metropolitan area has grown, so has the Fulton County School System. Families are attracted to Fulton County because of its consistent and well-deserved reputation as a quality school system. Businesses also establish a foothold in Fulton because employees want to live and work in communities with excellent schools.

Involved, active and informed parents and community members contribute greatly to the success of the system. All schools have business partners and local school advisory councils, and the Fulton Education Foundation provides additional resources.

### **Board of Education**

The Fulton County School System is governed by a seven-member Board of Education. The primary role of the Board is the legislation of school system policies, which are carried out by the Superintendent and staff. Specifically, the Board:

- selects, hires and evaluates the Superintendent;
- enacts policy;
- adopts courses of study and provides instructional aids;
- approves employment and duties of staff members;
- approves the budget, financial reports, audits, major expenditures, payment of obligations and policies;
- estimates and seeks to provide funds for the operation of the system;
- provides for the planning, expansion, improvement, financing, construction, maintenance, use and description of physical plants of the system;
- prescribes the minimum standards needed for the efficient operation and improvement of the system;
- evaluates the educational program;
- requires the establishment and maintenance of records, accounts, archives, management methods and procedures;
- provides for the dissemination of information necessary for creating a well-informed public; and
- invests time and resources in enhancing Board of Education governance practices.

Board members are elected from seven educational districts and serve four-year terms. Board members elect a president for a two-year term and a vice president for a one-year term. The Superintendent serves as ex-officio secretary and treasurer of the Board.

*Reference: Policy/Procedure ABA, ABB, ABCC, ABCD, BA, BBAA, BBD*

*Additional Information: [http://portal.fultonschools.org/School Board/Pages/default.aspx](http://portal.fultonschools.org/School_Board/Pages/default.aspx)*

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### Superintendent

The Fulton County School System Superintendent is the executive officer of the Board of Education. The Superintendent is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Board of Education. It is the Superintendent's duty to enforce all rules and regulations of the Fulton County Board of Education. As executive officer, the Superintendent has general supervision over the day-to-day operation of the school system and all of its schools, personnel and departments. However, specific job duties are delegated to staff members.

*Reference: Policy ABD*

*Additional Information: [http://portal.fultonschools.org/School\\_Board/Pages/superintendent.aspx](http://portal.fultonschools.org/School_Board/Pages/superintendent.aspx)*

### KEY PERSONNEL POLICIES/PROCEDURES

*For further information, refer to Fulton County Policies and Procedures located under the School Board section of the district web site, [www.fultonschools.org](http://www.fultonschools.org).*

### Certification

Professional employees of the Fulton County School System must hold proper certification from the Georgia Professional Standards Commission and must meet all state and federal requirements. It is the responsibility of the individual to keep his/her certification current. *Reference: Policy/Procedure GBBD*

### Communicable Diseases

In medically appropriate cases, an employee whose medical condition poses a substantial threat to the health or safety of the school community may be removed from the school or workplace until the employee's attendance on duty no longer poses such a threat. Both the decision to require the removal of the employee and the decision to permit the employee to return to work shall be based upon the advice of public health or other medical experts.

*Reference: Policy/Procedure GBRAA*

### Dress Code

The Fulton County School System expects employees to project a professional and appropriate image while interacting with students and school stakeholders. Employees should exercise good taste and common sense regarding dress. Given the various work functions of system employees, principals and department heads have the discretion for providing details and managing the dress of employees under their supervision. In general, clean, professional, business/business casual attire is acceptable and appropriate.

### Drug-Free Workplace

The Fulton County Board of Education recognizes that a drug-free workplace promotes employee productivity and facilitates the accomplishment of the school system's missions and goals. In accordance with federal and state law, the Board prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, sale or use of illegal drugs and alcohol. Specific disciplinary sanctions may include referral for prosecution, completion of an appropriate rehabilitation program at the employee's expense, suspension from employment, termination of employment and other disciplinary measures as appropriate. As a condition of employment, ***each employee must abide by the terms of this policy and must notify the Board within five days after any criminal charge or conviction for a drug or alcohol related violation.*** *Reference: Policy/Procedure GAM*

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### Employee Complaints

The Fulton County Board of Education has adopted a simple, expeditious and fair process for resolving employee-related problems at the lowest possible organizational level with a minimum of conflict and formal proceedings. Any employee who feels that his/her employment has been substantially affected by a violation or misapplication of any statute, policy, rule or regulation with which the Board of Education is required to comply, may file an employee complaint, unless it relates to one of the areas excluded from the employee complaint procedure. The following areas are excluded from the complaint procedure:

- Personnel evaluations;
- Professional Development Plans;
- Employee job performance;
- Termination, non-renewal, demotion, suspension or reprimand; and
- Employment contracts.

*Reference: Policy/Procedure GAE*

### Employment Requirements

All Fulton County School System personnel are employed and assigned by the Fulton County Board of Education upon the recommendation of the Superintendent. Teachers, principals and other contracted and professional personnel are eligible for regular employment provided they meet the educational and professional standards set by the State of Georgia and the Fulton County Board of Education and otherwise satisfy the requirements for the position. Other employees are eligible for regular employment upon evidence of completion of required training, ability to do the work for which they are applying and satisfactory recommendations. Employees who do not receive an employment contract are considered “at-will.” Employment-at-will means that, in general, an employer may terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any reason, or for no reason, unless an agreement or law exists to the contrary.

In some cases, the school system may hire or place a staff member in a part-time position. These positions are not guaranteed and are evaluated annually or as needed. Employees who change to part-time status forfeit any seniority that had been established while working full-time. Seniority for part-time employees who move into full-time positions is determined by the most recent full-time hire date.

Every employee must have an acceptable background check. All employees must complete I-9 forms as required under federal law and must provide proof of eligibility for employment. *Reference: Policy/Procedure GA, GBD, GCD*

### Employee Workday

The **minimum** workday for all full-time school based certified employees and school assistants is eight hours, and the minimum work week is 40 hours. All such personnel shall report for duty at least 30 minutes prior to the opening of school and shall remain for at least 15 minutes after closing time, and for any additional time that the employee's immediate supervisor may require. Duties which shall count toward fulfillment of the minimum work day requirement include such duties as teaching, preparation for teaching, assisting with teaching and with teaching preparation, staff meetings, conferences with students and parents, planning conferences, responsibilities



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related to school activities in the community, and other duties as set forth in Administrative Procedure GBBA or in the employee's contract or job description or as assigned by the immediate supervisor. The base salary is paid on the basis of these duties.

The **minimum** workday for all full-time non-school-based certified employees is eight hours, and the minimum work week is 40 hours. All such personnel shall report for duty at the time designated by the immediate supervisor. Duties which count toward fulfillment of the minimum workday include those duties specified in the employee's job description and employment contract (if any), and any additional duties that may be required by the immediate supervisor. The base salary is paid on the basis of these duties.

### **Evaluation**

All employees of the Board of Education must have their performance evaluated annually by an appropriately-trained evaluator. Performance evaluation records are a part of the personnel evaluation file and are confidential. *Reference: Policy/Procedure GBI*

### **Gifts and Solicitations**

To avoid a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict, employees of the Board of Education shall not directly or indirectly accept, solicit, receive or agree to receive any gift, rebate, benefit, favor, service or other thing of value from any vendor or prospective vendor of the school system or from any other person or company doing or seeking to do business with the system. Exceptions include:

- food and/or beverage consumed at an occasional meal or event;
- promotional items distributed to the general public or employees;
- an award, plaque, certificate, memento or similar item;
- any gift with a value less than \$25.00;
- income derived from non-school employment that is consistent with Board policy;
- reasonable expenses for travel, lodging, food and registration to permit an employee to attend a meeting on behalf of the system; or
- items given for the use and benefit of students of the system.

Giving gifts to teachers, coaches, club sponsors and other school employees at certain times of the year is traditional for many students and parents. The Board does not prohibit teachers and employees from accepting gifts of nominal value on special occasions. However, no one should be pressured to give or contribute to an employee gift, and employees must never allow a gift from a student, parent or anyone else to influence their treatment of others. Employees should not accept expensive or frequent gifts because this may create a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict.

As a general rule, gifts that meet the following guidelines will not be considered to create a conflict of interest:

- an individual gift with a value of \$25 or less; or
- a group gift with a value of \$10 or less per contributor, not exceeding a total value of \$500.

Gifts with a value of \$200 or more must be reported to the employee's principal or immediate supervisor.

*Reference: GAJB*

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### **Health Exams**

The Fulton County Board of Education may require an employee to have a health examination and/or to provide a physician's statement when the employee's physical, mental and/or emotional condition appears to be interfering with the employee's ability to meet the standards necessary to perform his/her job duties safely or efficiently or if such behavior constitutes a direct threat to the health and safety of the employee or others, or when required by law. The Board may designate a physician of its choosing or use the employee's physician.

*Reference: Policy GBRA, GBRAA*

### **Internet Acceptable Use**

The system maintains an electronic network (EN) that includes local and wide-area networks and access to world-wide networks such as Internet. Access to the EN, along with the hardware and software that support access, are the property of the system, and shall be used solely in support of the system's instructional and administrative programs. Use of this property is a privilege that may be discontinued at any time. The EN should be used only in a responsible, ethical and lawful manner. Any unauthorized use or failure to comply with local and systemwide provisions relating to EN use will be grounds for loss of EN access and other disciplinary and/or legal action.

Social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, etc., are prevalent in today's society and are often used to communicate with friends and acquaintances. However, the school district does not view these sites as instructional resources and they should not be accessed during the school day. They are essentially for personal use and should not be used as a way to communicate student information. Student information is protected under the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and no information protected under FERPA should be posted by any Fulton County employee on any networking site. In addition, student pictures should not be posted to these sites. School and classroom information should only be posted to the employee's designated school web site. It is strongly suggested that employees refrain from "friending" students or providing student access to their social networking site. Since many social networking sites have controls in place that limit who can publicly view the profile, it is suggested that employees use these controls so that students and parents do not have accidental access to their private information and photos. Remember, system-issued laptops are the property of the Fulton County School System and should be used for school business only. School-system laptops and other electronic devices may be confiscated and/or monitored for appropriate use at any time. *Reference: Board Policy IFBGA*

### **Professional Development**

All employees are expected to participate in required trainings designed to maintain or improve job skills. Certified personnel must meet the requirements of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the state of Georgia by completing all mandatory training and course requirements. *Reference: Policy/Procedure GAD*

### **Reduction in Force**

Under certain circumstances, the Fulton County Board of Education may implement a reduction in force.

Examples include:

- drop in student enrollment;
- cutback in state or federal funding;

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- revenue shortfall;
- cancellation of programs;
- closing or consolidation of schools; or
- other similar circumstances.

Should the Board of Education implement a reduction in force, it will do so in a manner that serves the best interests of the school system and causes minimal disruption to students. Personnel will be selected for separation based on objective, readily ascertainable factors that are applied in a fair, consistent and evenhanded manner without bias or discrimination. Terminations occasioned by a reduction in force shall be carried out in accordance with any applicable board policies or procedures and the Georgia Fair Dismissal Act. *Reference: Policy GBKA*

### **Resignation**

Contracted employees are expected to honor their contracts. Except in emergency situations or because of a promotion to a higher- level position, certificated employees shall not break their contracts during the school year or after May 1 for the next school year without written consent. While the employee may be given an immediate release, the system also may grant a release by a specified date or hold the employee accountable to the terms of the contract. Contracted employees who do not appropriately obtain release from their contracts or who abandon their contracts shall be subject to liquidated damages in the amount of \$500 and shall be reported to the Professional Standards Commission for abandonment of contract. Non-contracted employees are expected to give at least two weeks' notice, in writing, when resigning. . *Reference: Policy/Procedure GBO, GCO*

### **Suspension/Termination**

The employment contract of any teacher, principal or other professional employee having a contract for a definite term may be terminated, suspended or placed on administrative leave for any of the following reasons:

- incompetence;
- insubordination;
- willful neglect of duties;
- immorality;
- inciting, encouraging or counseling students to violate any valid state law, municipal ordinance or policy rule of the Board of Education;
- reduction of staff due to loss of students or cancellation of programs;
- failure to secure and maintain necessary educational training; or
- any other good and sufficient cause.

Misconduct that may lead to disciplinary action against classified (non-contracted) employees includes:

- incompetence;
- insubordination;
- willful neglect of duties;
- immorality;
- conviction of any crime involving moral turpitude;

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- failure to comply with all reasonable orders, requests or directions of the superintendent or other supervisors;
- violation of any rule or regulation of the Board of Education;
- inciting, encouraging or counseling students to violate any valid state law, municipal ordinance, or policy or rule of the Board of Education;
- violation of any provision of an employment agreement; or
- any other good and sufficient cause.

Detailed work rules are issued to non-contracted employees at the time of employment and are also posted in each building and department in the system. This list is not all-inclusive. As “at-will” employees, non-contracted employees may be terminated at any time for good and sufficient cause. *Reference: Policy/Procedure GBKL, GCK*

### **Tobacco Products**

The use of tobacco products is prohibited by employees, students and visitors at all system-sponsored events and on all school system property, including, but not limited to, athletic venues, parking lots, buses and vehicles owned by the system, at all times. *Reference: Board Policy KMA*

### **Transfers**

Employees of the school system may be transferred involuntarily (surplused) according to the needs and requirements of the school system. Employees may be surplused for a variety of reasons, including:

- opening/closing of schools;
- loss/gain in student enrollments;
- loss/gain in funding;
- restructure/reorganization;
- budget loss/gain; or
- reduction in force (RIF.)

*Reference: Policy/Procedure GBM*

### **International ACH Transaction (IAT) Rules**

Banking industry rules requires the Fulton County School District (the “District”), as originator of electronic payments made through the ACH network, to identify payments made to a payee where **the entire payment or amount is paid directly or immediately forwarded to a foreign bank account**. The rules are known as the “International ACH Transaction (IAT) Rules and are pursuant to requirements of the Office of Foreign Assets Control (“OFAC”). For employees who are identified as IAT payees, the District is required to submit all future electronic payments to the employee’s bank in a special format or remit the payment to the employee via paper check.

In order for the rules to apply the **full amount** of the payment you receive electronically from the District must be paid directly, or forwarded, to a bank in another country. Partial transfers of your direct deposit for items such as spending money to a child studying abroad do not qualify you as an IAT payee for payroll purposes.

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If your direct deposit is paid to a financial institution outside of the United States or if you have instructions with your recipient bank to wire the full amount of your direct deposit to a foreign financial institution, then you must immediately notify the District's Payroll Office in writing. For those individuals identified as having IAT qualifying payments the District will remit payment via paper check in lieu of direct deposit.

### BENEFITS

The school system offers a comprehensive benefits package to employees. New employees have 31 days to select their benefits options. All employees can make changes to benefits plans during the annual Open Enrollment period, held each fall. Below is brief information on benefits that are available to employees. For more details, refer to [www.myfultonbenefits.com](http://www.myfultonbenefits.com). *Reference: Board Policy EGA, EGAF, EGAE, EGAA*

#### **Health Insurance**

The System's Health Insurance Program is administered by the State of Georgia, Department of Community Health, and offered through either Cigna or United Health Care. Employees may choose from the program that best meets his/her needs. Single or family coverage is available. A portion of the health insurance is paid by the school system. Employees on leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) who exhaust all paid leave may be responsible for the employee's portion of health care premiums.

An employee going on unpaid leave may be able to continue health insurance for a limited time. The benefits office can provide details regarding coverage and possible premium increases. Employees who retire (and will be receiving a monthly pension check) may continue their health insurance coverage. Employees whose health insurance is terminated for other reasons, or covered dependents of employees whose health insurance is terminated, may continue their coverage for a limited period under COBRA.

#### **Short-Term Disability Insurance**

Short-Term Disability (STD) insurance is available for eligible employees who become disabled. The employee pays 100% of the STD Insurance.

#### **Long-Term Disability Insurance**

Long-Term Disability (LTD) insurance is provided to employees at no cost. The school system also provides the option of employee-paid LTD.

#### **Basic Group Term Life (GTL) Insurance**

Life insurance is provided free to all active, regular employees in amounts based on annual salaries.

<b>Basic Annual Salary</b>	<b>Life Insurance Amount</b>
Less than \$12,000	\$24,000
\$12,000 but less than \$18,000	\$30,000
\$18,000 but less than \$26,000	\$40,000
\$26,000 and over	\$50,000

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At retirement you may continue to carry \$20,000 life insurance by having premiums deducted from your pension check, or otherwise paying the premium on a monthly basis.

### **Supplemental Group Term Life (GTL) and Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance**

Supplemental Life Insurance and Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D) Insurance is available for eligible employees at group rates. Spousal and children's coverage is also available. AD&D coverage pays only in the event of an accidental death or dismemberment, and should not be considered "life" insurance.

Supplemental GTL and AD&D coverage may continue in retirement or separation from the school system. The employee pays 100% of the GTL and AD&D Insurance. Supplemental GTL Insurance is offered when an employee is hired. If it is refused at that time, and the employee later seeks to enroll, proof of insurability will be required. Proof of insurability is not required for AD&D coverage.

### **Permanent Universal Life (UL) Insurance**

Permanent Universal Life Insurance is available for eligible employees, spouses and dependent children.

Permanent UL is individually written, and the resulting premium will vary based on age, gender, life-style, and optional coverages and riders. As these are individual policies, they are completely portable when the employee leaves the system or retires. The employee pays 100% of the UL Insurance.

### **Dental Insurance**

Dental Insurance is available for eligible employees, spouses and dependent children. The Dental Insurance plan provides benefits for Preventive, Basic, Major and Orthodontic procedures. There is no waiting period for coverage under the plan. A portion of the Dental insurance is paid by the school system.

### **Vision Insurance**

Vision Insurance is available for eligible employees, spouses and dependent children. Benefits are available for both in-network and out-of-network providers and procedures. The employee pays 100% of the Vision Insurance.

### **Medical Flexible Spending Account**

A Medical Flexible Spending Account (MFSA) is available for eligible employees, spouses and dependent children. A MFSA is not insurance, but rather a way to pay for certain qualified, non-reimbursed medical expenses in a pre-tax salary reduction. The amount which can be placed in an MFSA each year may be limited by the Internal Revenue Service, but may not exceed the annual maximum established by the school system. Any monies placed in an MFSA against which qualified expenditures cannot be filed are forfeited according to Federal Law. The employee contributes 100% to the MFSA.

### **Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account**

A Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account (DCFSA) is available for eligible employees, spouses and dependent children. A DCFSA is not insurance, but rather a way to pay for certain qualified dependent care expenses in a pre-tax salary reduction. The amount which can be placed in a DCFSA each year may be limited by the Internal Revenue Service, but may not exceed the annual maximum established by the school system. Any monies placed in a DCFSA against which qualified expenditures cannot be filed are forfeited according to Federal

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Law. A DCFSA cannot be used if claiming a Dependent Child Credit on your Federal Income Tax return for that year (please consult a tax professional for specific details). The employee contributes 100% to the DCFSA.

### **Long-Term Care Insurance**

Long-Term Care Insurance (LTC) is available for eligible employees, spouses, parents, grandparents, parents-in-law and grandparents-in-law. Coverage is available in various levels of daily benefits, and for various duration (length) of payments. All premiums are set a group rates for all eligible applicants. LTC for the employee and spouse may be payroll deducted. All other premiums are direct-billed to the appropriate person(s). The employee pays 100% of the LTC Insurance.

### **Social Security and Medicare Insurance**

The school system *does not* participate in the Social Security portion (OASDI) of FICA. Therefore, employees of the System generally do not have the 6.2% for Social Security withheld from their earnings, and these dollars are thereby available as discretionary income to the employee. The system encourages its employees to take full advantage of this benefit, and participate in one of the Tax Deferred Investments described below (see Tax Deferred Investments section), if eligible.

However, the system *does* participate in the Medicare portion (HI) of FICA for those employees hired *after* March 31, 1986. Those employees will see the 1.45% for Medicare withheld from their earnings. This amount is then matched by the system when remitted to the Federal Government. Employees hired *prior to* April 1, 1986 will continue to not have the Medicare portion withheld, and may affect eligibility for Medicare benefits after retirement.

### **Workers' Compensation**

Employees are covered for work-related accidents and injuries under the Georgia Workers' Compensation Act. On-the-job-injuries must be immediately reported to the supervisor and to the Risk Management department. Treatment for any injuries must be given from an approved medical facility. Each school and building should have a posting of approved providers. Treatment at one of these centers is covered in full by Fulton County Board of Education Workers' Compensation. Treatment by a doctor or clinic that is **NOT** on the approved list will not be covered by the school system. If this injury is life threatening, Fulton County Board of Education will pay for the initial emergency treatment.

### **Liability Insurance**

Employees are covered by a professional liability insurance policy provided by the Board. The Board pays the entire cost of this insurance.

### **Tax Deferred Investments**

Current IRS regulations allow employees to participate in tax deferred investments under Sections 403(b) and 457(b) of the Internal Revenue Code (commonly known as 403(b)/457 plans) if they qualify. All employees of Fulton, whether regular or temporary (full-time or part-time, regardless of work schedule), are eligible to participate providing that contributions are made from the employee's Fulton wages.

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LEAVE

Employees are expected to maintain regular attendance. School principals and department heads are expected to monitor their employees' attendance and take action when attendance problems occur. When leave is required, the following options are available. For complete details, refer to Board policy. A copy of the school system's Leave Handbook is available in each school or administrative center and also under the Human Resources section of the system's web site, [www.fultonschools.org](http://www.fultonschools.org). *Reference: Policy/Procedure GBRI*

**Sick Leave**

Employees may use paid sick leave for absences due to their own illness, injury or exposure to contagious disease, or due to illness or death in their immediate family. Unused sick leave is accumulated from one contract or assignment year to the next, up to a maximum of 120 days. Accumulated sick leave is forfeited when employment is terminated.

Regular full-time employees are entitled to sick leave with full pay determined by the length of continuous service since the last date of hire as follows:

- Less than 10 full years: 1¼ sick days for each completed contract or employment month, up to a maximum of 15 days per year (3 of which may be personal.)
- 10 or more years: 2 sick days for each completed contract or employment month, up to a maximum of 20 days per year (5 of which may be personal.)

Regular part-time employees earn paid sick leave in proportion to the amount of time worked. For example: An employee working three days per week would accrue three-fifths of the sick leave of a full time employee.

In the case of an anticipated or foreseeable absence (scheduled surgery, childbirth, etc.), requests must be given at least 30 days in advance. In the case of a sudden or unexpected need for sick leave, requests must be given as far in advance as possible but no later than one hour prior to the employee's normal starting time.

*Spousal Donation.* As provided by State Statute, when both spouses are employed by the School System an employee is allowed to donate sick leave days (per rolling year) to his or her spouse for the purposes of maternity/paternity leave, employee illness, or illness of a family member.

Employees who come to Fulton from another Georgia public school system or the State Board of Education may transfer up to 45 days of unused sick and personal leave accumulated in their previous employment. Verification from the previous employer is required. Any sick or personal leave credited to an employee under this provision shall be forfeited if such employee withdraws from service for a period of 12 or more consecutive months, unless the withdrawal from service is for educational leave to seek a higher level or different field of certification and provided that the withdrawal from service for this purpose is for no longer than 24 consecutive months.

**Personal Leave**

Prior approval of the principal or immediate supervisor is required before a personal day may be taken. In cases of anticipated or foreseeable need for personal leave, requests for personal leave must be submitted at least 30



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days in advance. Except during the times listed below, employees are not required to disclose the specific reason for taking personal leave other than to specify that the absence is personal. Except in extreme emergencies and with the prior written approval of the employee's immediate supervisor, personal leave is not allowed at the following times:

- the work day immediately prior to or after a holiday or vacation;
- the first day of the school year and the following five working days thereof;
- the last work day of the school year and the preceding five working days thereof;
- pre-planning, conference, professional development, registration and post-planning days; and
- other critical days identified by the principal or department head.

Upon retirement, employees may be paid for one-half of their unused accumulated sick leave, up to a maximum of 40 days.

### **Family and Medical Leave**

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) is a federal law which helps employees balance work responsibilities with family and medical needs. At times, employees may need to take leave from their jobs for a temporary period to address certain family responsibilities or their own serious health conditions. FMLA requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave. In some circumstances, the leave may be taken intermittently. To be eligible for FMLA, an employee must have worked for the Fulton County School System for at least one year and must have worked at least 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months.

Qualified FMLA leave includes:

- Incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or child birth;
- Care for employee's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care;
- Care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition;
- Serious health condition that makes employee unable to perform his/her job;
- Any qualifying exigency that arises from a spouse's, child's or parent's active duty in the Armed Forces including an order or call to duty; or
- To care for a spouse, child, parent or next of kin (Defined as the nearest blood relative) who are current service members or veterans (with serious illnesses or injuries incurred during active duty in the Armed Forces or to veterans discharged or released under conditions, other than dishonorable, five years prior to the date the employee's military caregiver leave begins).

All requests for leave must be documented via the current prescribed system for requesting leave in the school system. When an employee requests leave for any purpose covered under the FMLA (whether the employee identifies the leave as such or not) the employee will be notified that the leave will be treated as FMLA.

In certain cases, intermittent leave may be approved. Special restrictions apply under the FMLA to intermittent leave or leave on a reduced leave schedule for instructional employees. "Instructional employees" are those whose principal function is to teach and instruct students in a class, a small group, or an individual setting, and includes special education assistants such as signers for the hearing impaired.

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The school system reserves the right to require a fitness for duty certificate prior to return to work from any leave protected by Federal law. The failure to provide any medical certification or a “complete and sufficient” medical certification may result in the denial of any FMLA leave request. The system reserves the right to request periodic written updates from the employee about his or her medical condition.

If an employee does not return to work after taking FMLA leave, the school system may seek reimbursement of any health care premiums paid during the unpaid leave period.

### **Sick Leave Bank**

The Sick Leave Bank provides members with paid sick leave after their own sick leave has been exhausted. Employees who earn paid sick leave are eligible for membership in the Sick Leave Bank after completing one full year of employment. New members are accepted only during the open enrollment period held annually. All new members must donate the number of days then required of existing members. Membership in the Sick Leave Bank continues from year to year unless the member submits written notice of withdrawal during the annual open enrollment period in a year subsequent to the year of the employee’s enrollment.

### **Bereavement**

Employees are allowed up to three days of paid leave (five days if out-of-town travel in excess of 150 miles is required) in the event of the death of a member of their immediate family. Immediate family is defined as employee's parent, sibling, spouse, child, grandparent, grandchild, spouse's parent, spouse's sibling or a relative of the employee living in the employee's household. Two days of the allowed bereavement leave may be used for the death of any family member not included in the definition of immediate family. The employee may be required to submit written substantiation of the need to be absent for this reason.

### **Professional and Duty Leave**

An employee may be granted paid or unpaid professional leave to engage in activities associated with professional organizations related to the employee’s position in the school system (e.g., annual conferences, state meetings, etc.). Professional or duty leave requires approval in advance by the employee’s immediate supervisor/department head.

### **Legal Leave**

An employee may be absent without loss of pay and without charge to any other category of leave when attending court as a juror or when subpoenaed to testify or requested to testify by the School Board's attorney in a case arising out of duties as an employee of the school system. The employee must notify the immediate supervisor as soon as possible after being served with the summons for jury duty, the request or a subpoena to appear in a case. An employee should attempt to schedule during non-work hours any appearance needed for any legal action where the employee is a witness to facts or events unrelated to the employee's job duties. If such scheduling is not possible, then the employee may be absent without loss of pay and without charge to any other category of leave. The employee may retain any compensation he/she receives for serving as a juror or as a witness.

The employee’s supervisor can request a copy of any summons, subpoena or other document on which the employee is basing the leave request under this provision and such documentation must be provided as soon as

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possible. Any employee may be disciplined for failure to provide the requested documentation to substantiate the leave.

### **Military Leave**

Employees may take leave while engaged in the performance of “ordered military duty” as defined in Georgia Code Section 38-2-279, and while going to and returning from such duty. Subject to budget considerations, the Board may provide that any regular, full-time employee serving in the uniformed services as a reservist or a member of the National Guard and who is called to active duty because of war, national emergency or other extraordinary circumstances as approved by the Board, will be paid the difference, if any, between the employee's School System pay and the employee's military pay.

### **Vacation Leave**

Only regular full-time and part-time employees in 12-month positions are eligible for vacation. In cases of anticipated or foreseeable need for vacation leave, requests for vacation leave should be submitted at least 30 days in advance. Vacation begins to accrue after one full month of employment in a 12-month position. Full-time employees accrue vacation at the following rates based on years of continuous service in a permanent position since last date of hire:

<b>Years of Service</b>	<b>Annual Vacation Accrual</b>
0-5	10 days
6 – 10	15 days
11+	20 days

### **Unpaid Medical Leave**

An employee who does not have sufficient accumulated paid sick leave or vacation leave to cover medical absences may request unpaid medical leave. Unpaid medical leave shall not exceed six months. Leave for this purpose may also be available under the FMLA leave provision.

### **Childcare Leave**

An employee with at least three years of continuous service since their last date of hire may be granted unpaid leave up to six months to care for the employee's child following the child's birth or in connection with the placement of the child with the employee for adoption or foster care. Leave for this purpose may also be available under the FMLA leave provision.

### **Study Leave**

An employee with at least three years of continuous employment since the last date of hire may be granted unpaid leave up to six months to seek a higher degree, obtain a different field of certification, or enroll in some other study or training program of mutual benefit to the employee and the School System. The employee will be required to complete satisfactorily the equivalent of at least one semester or unit of study during the period of leave. The request for study leave must be submitted by April 1 of the preceding school year. Documentation may be required as the School System deems appropriate.

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### **Job Protection Upon Returning From Leave**

As required by law, employees returning from FMLA protected leave (up to 12 or 26 weeks) will be returned to the same or equivalent position and location as defined under the FMLA. Employees returning from non-FMLA protected leave (up to six months) may be returned to the same or substantially equivalent position (though not necessarily the same location) provided there is a vacancy for which the employee is qualified. Reinstatement of employment is not guaranteed.

### **Job Abandonment**

Employees taking unapproved leave, failing to respond to written communication from the school system regarding leave status, or failing to return at the specified time following an approved leave of absence will be considered to have abandoned the job and will be separated from the system. Leave taken without approval as required under this policy, will be treated as unauthorized leave and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **Miscellaneous Leave Items**

- Employees must enter a Leave Request for all planned leave, such as scheduled surgery, vacation and jury duty.
- Before requesting leave, employees should use Employee Express/Quota Overview to make sure sufficient time is available.
- An employee on approved leave who misrepresents facts in order to obtain paid or unpaid leave will be denied reinstatement or terminated.
- Fulton County employees on approved sick leave may not accept employment or work for other employers during the period of approved leave. Violation of this requirement is grounds for disciplinary action including termination of employment.
- Employees are expected to return to work from leave at the end of the approved time period. Requests for extension of leave must be submitted in writing before the end of the original approved leave period.
- If applicable, once a leave confirmation email is received, the employee must then enter the absence in CASE or Employee Self Serve (ESS.)

## PENSION

All full-time employees of the Fulton County School System must belong to one of two retirement systems. The majority of Fulton County School System employees participate in the Teachers' Retirement System of Georgia (TRS). TRS offers a defined benefit plan, guaranteeing a monthly benefit – based on a member's final average salary and service – which is payable for the life of the member, and when applicable, transferable to a member's spouse or beneficiary(ies). A defined benefit retirement plan (401A) relieves members of the burden of making investment decisions and assuming the risk associated with those decisions. Unlike an IRA or 401K account, a TRS retirement benefit is not impacted by stock market performance. The State of Georgia guarantees TRS members will receive retirement income for life. Also, depending on the plan of retirement chosen, a TRS retirement benefit can be passed to a beneficiary at a member's death, and the beneficiary continues to receive this income until his or her death. For detailed information, visit the TRS web site at [www.trsga.com](http://www.trsga.com).

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The Fulton County School Employees Pension Fund (FCSEPF) serves all eligible Fulton County Board of Education employees not covered under the Teachers' Retirement System of Georgia. This group includes Bus Drivers, Cafeteria Workers, Custodians, Fleet Mechanics, Maintenance Workers, and Warehouse Personnel. The fund also serves employees who qualify for both TRS and FCSEPF. These are employees hired prior to July 1, 1988, who have been continuously employed with the Fulton County Board of Education since that date. Like TRS, FCSEPF offers a secure, defined benefits plan. Additional information is available at [www.fultonschools.org/dept/Pension](http://www.fultonschools.org/dept/Pension).

### ADDITIONAL BENEFITS AND SERVICES

#### **School Assignments for Employees' Children**

Children of full-time employees, regardless of where they live, may attend the Fulton County School where their parents /guardians work. To attend an out-of-zone school, the employee must establish to the satisfaction of the Student Hardship Committee that such an assignment is necessary or convenient to the employee. In deciding whether a request is justifiable, the Hardship Committee will consider such factors as the appropriate school nearest the place of employment, the appropriate school nearest a child care center or sitter caring for the child before or after school hours (elementary only) and other reasonable factors. Current employees must submit an Application For Transfer form during the application period; however, a waiver of the deadline will be considered for new hires or when an employee's circumstances change during the year. For those who are continuing employment, their application request will be automatically renewed as long as space is available at the school.

#### **Fulton Teachers' Credit Union**

Fulton Teachers' Credit Union is the eleventh oldest credit union in the state of Georgia. It was chartered in 1930 to serve employees of the Fulton County School System and their families. As time progressed, the credit union welcomed private schools into its field of membership. The Credit Union retains a full-time staff to serve members at their offices in Hapeville and Alpharetta. Members are eligible to participate in a wide range of savings, investments and loan services and every effort is made to keep both savings and loan rates competitive with the marketplace. More information is available at the credit union web site, <http://ftcu.com>.

#### **Sparkfly**

The school system and local Chambers of Commerce have partnered with Sparkfly to offer Fulton School System employees hundreds of discounts on services, purchases and entertainment. For more information, visit the Sparkfly web site at <http://fulton.k12.ga.us.sparkfly.com>.

### HELPFUL INFORMATION

#### **Employee Express**

Employee Express is a quick and easy way to access your personnel and professional learning information. The web-based program has two components:

- Employee Self Serve—a web portal that allows you to view salary statement, enter working time if applicable, view leave requests, update direct deposit forms, view benefits options, change beneficiary information, look up employees by name or location and maintain your personal contact information.

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- Enterprise Learning System—this web portal replaces *MyPDC* and is used to find and register for professional development courses, print professional learning transcripts and access on-line training modules.

Employee Express is available by logging into the Employee web portal. The direct link to Employee Express is <https://employeeexpress.fultonschools.org/irj/portal>.

**Note:** All employees are required to complete on-line web trainings explaining Employee Express and Enterprise Learning System. These trainings are available from the Learning Solutions portal, by going to *Business Systems* in the Course Catalogue and selecting Employee Express.

### Payroll

All custodians, school nutrition, substitutes, hourly paid employees, as well as salaried employees who are 49 percent or less are paid every two weeks. All other employees are paid monthly. Employees are paid either by a paper check or direct deposit into the employee's personal banking institution. Direct Deposit is a convenient method to automatically deposit all of your net earnings into the financial institution of your choice and it is highly encouraged. When using direct deposit, you should always confirm that your payroll has been deposited into your account before writing checks or committing funds for withdrawal. However, if, due to an administrative error on the part of Fulton County Schools, your direct deposit is not in your account on your designated payday, and overdraft fees are incurred as a result of that error, Fulton County Schools **may** reimburse you for any validated fees up to a maximum of \$75.00. Regular Full and Part Time employees who wish to enroll must complete the information via Employee Express. If you select Direct Deposit, printed copies of your advice statement are not sent to you each payday, but are available for review and printing on or before payday through Employee Express. This information will include your earnings, deductions and leave balances. If you wish, you may print a copy of this for yourself.

For those who do not select direct deposit, pay checks are sent to the school or department location via school mail for employees with a permanent base, and checks are mailed to the employees' home during the summer for monthly school-based employees. Bi-weekly employees who normally receive their checks at school or a designated department during the school year will also receive their checks there during the summer months. Checks are sent U.S. mail to the home address for employees without a permanent base (such as Substitutes) the day before payday. Employee Express can also be used to view the information shown on your check (your earnings, deductions and leave balances) as well.

Certain employee groups **MUST** submit all work time on a weekly basis using Employee Express. Visit the "Help" section in Employee Express for a listing of applicable employee groups. A working week is Friday through Thursday. You must submit your time no later than Friday, as it will be approved by your principal or manager no later than Monday (based on a non-holiday week). If you use the CASE phone or web system to report your absences, you do not have to enter your absences in your timesheet in the ESS. They will be automatically entered for you through a nightly interface with the CASE system.

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**Person ID**

All employees are assigned a unique employee identification number. This number is used for your system records and should be kept confidential. Your Person ID number is printed on your pay advice/pay check.

**Sexual Harassment Awareness**

The school system has developed two web-based trainings to address the serious issue of sexual harassment in the workplace and against students. All Fulton employees are required to complete these two trainings, which can be accessed through the Enterprise Learning System web portal in Employee Express, under the Human Resources course catalogue.

**Staffing Zones**

To better serve the needs of employees, the Human Resources division has organized Staffing Zones.

Patty Johnson 404-763-4581	Northwest Learning Community
Pam Gayles 404-763-4582	Central Learning Community
Tamika Spirling-Brooks 404-763-4583	South Learning Community
Kirk Balcom 404-763-4590	Northeast Learning Community
Erica McMullen 404-763-5733	Operations Staffing

**WebMail**

Most Fulton County employees are given an email account to be used for school system purposes only. Employees may access their email from any computer with internet access by going to [www.fultonschools.org](http://www.fultonschools.org), clicking on the Employees icon and scrolling to *Webmail* under the Technology icon. Please follow the school system's Internet Acceptable Use policy agreement when using email and all other electronic network programs.

**Work Day Calendars**

A listing of employee work days is located under the Careers section of the Fulton County School System web site. The direct link is [http://portal.fultonschools.org/Careers/Pages/Work\\_Calendar.aspx](http://portal.fultonschools.org/Careers/Pages/Work_Calendar.aspx).

**Helpful Phone Numbers**

Below are frequently requested phone numbers for various Fulton County School System departments. The Fulton County School System web site, [www.fultonschools.org](http://www.fultonschools.org), has a comprehensive list of schools and departments, including phone numbers. The Communications Department also maintains a telephone directory, located in Outlook Public Folders>Communications>Telephone Directory>Resource Manual.

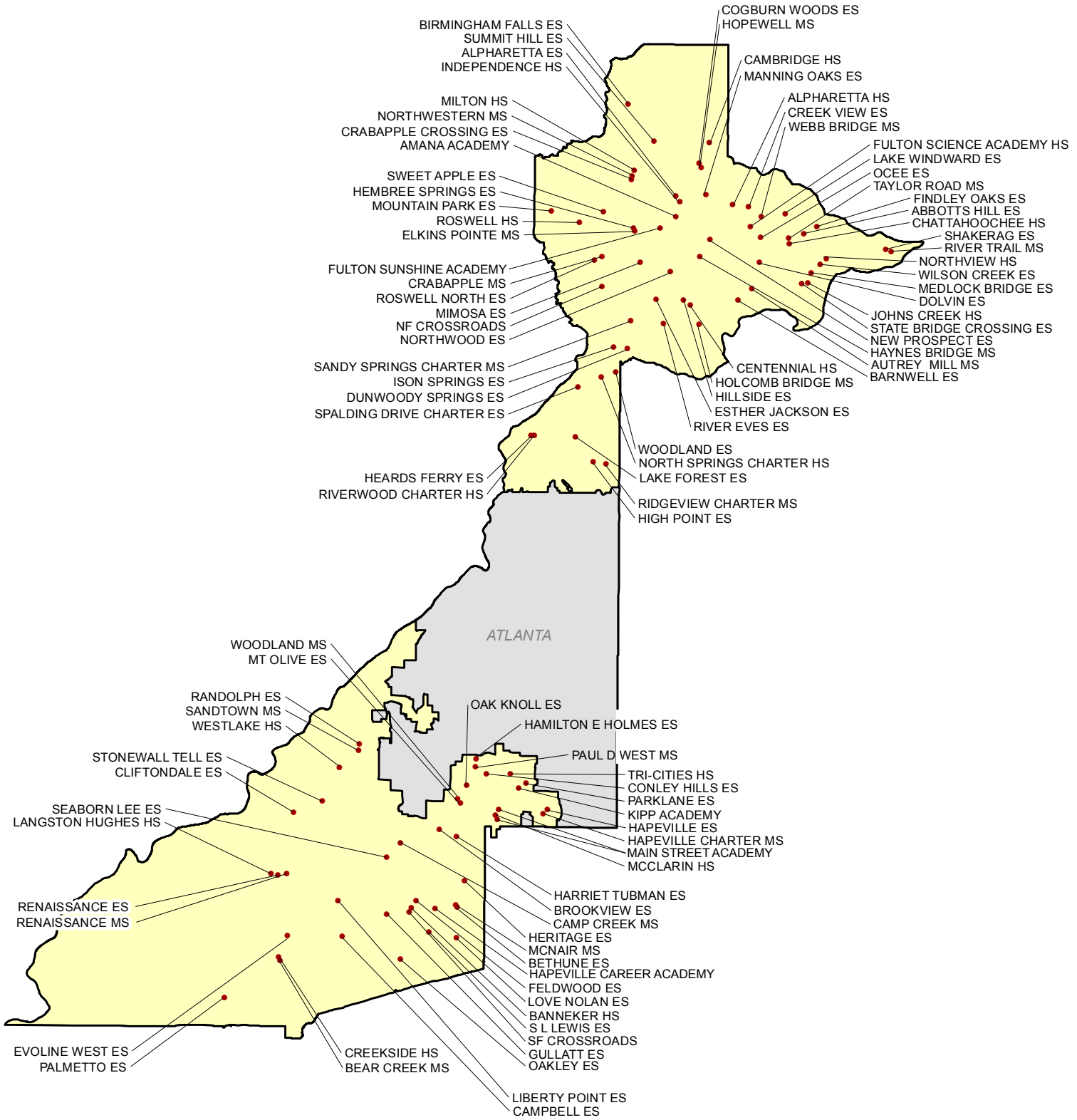
Note—all numbers are Area Code 404

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Administrative Center Main Number ....	768-3600	Personnel Records .....	763-6870
Area Superintendents		Professional Learning Center South .....	669-8090
Northwest Learning Community....(7)	667-7760	Recruitment and Retention .....	763-6858
Central Learning Community .....	763-6804	Northwest Staffing Zone .....	763-4581
South Learning Community.....	763-6857	Central Staffing Zone .....	763-4582
Northeast Learning Community.....(7)	667-7760	South Staffing Zone.....	763-4584
Benefits.....	763-6845	Northeast Staffing Zone.....	763-4590
Communications .....	763-6830	Operations Staffing.....	763-5733
Certification .....	669-4934	Substitute Services.....	763-4583
Leave Administration .....	763-6860	Technology Help Desk .....	346-4350
Payroll.....	763-6849		



# School Locations 2013-2014



Fulton County Schools  
786 Cleveland Avenue SW  
Atlanta, GA 30315-7299  
404-768-3600 [www.fultonschools.org](http://www.fultonschools.org)



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Linda McCain, *Vice President*

Julia Bernath

Linda Bryant

Gail Dean

Catherine Maddox

Katie Reeves

Robert M. Avossa, Ed.D., *Superintendent*

786 Cleveland Avenue SW Atlanta, Georgia 30315-7299 404-768-3600 [www.fultonschools.org](http://www.fultonschools.org)

Equal opportunity employer and service provider.  
Reasonable accommodations and modifications made for the disabled.  
404-763-4584 TTY 1-800-255-0135

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