

GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**PERSONNEL
HANDBOOK**

2024 - 2025

DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Envisioning a system of world-class schools

GWINNETT
COUNTY
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

437 OLD PEACHTREE RD NW
SUWANEE GA 30024

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TEAM GCPS MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

In Gwinnett County Public Schools, our core business is teaching and learning, and we believe the quality of our employees is the most important factor in providing a quality education for the students of our community. Whether you are a teacher or someone who supports teaching and learning, you were selected as a GCPS employee—a new member of Team GCPS—because we believe you have the knowledge and skills that will assist our school system in fulfilling its vision of becoming a system of world-class schools...one that works to ensure that each and every student will learn, grow, and thrive...in their school years and beyond. Team GCPS is committed to reaching and teaching the “whole learner,” going beyond academics to support a child’s well-being and sense of belonging in the school community, tailoring the learning experience to our students’ needs, and embracing, and celebrating the rich diversity of our community.

This school year marks the launch of our Blueprint for the Future, the district’s strategic plan. Our strategic plan will serve as our roadmap as we work together, united—as Team GCPS—to serve our students, staff, families, and the broader community. A key component of this work is the district’s locally developed Portrait of a Graduate, which will serve as our guide for transforming our schools and redesigning the school experience. The Portrait will serve as our collective vision of what we want for our children and will help us ensure we are providing them with what they will need to be ready for their future, not our past.

As is characteristic of all dynamic organizations, our school district is constantly improving. That drive to improve helped GCPS become a three-time finalist and two-time winner of The Broad Prize for Urban Education and a College Board AP District of the Year among large districts. It also is why our schools earn honors, and our employees continue to be recognized as the best in their fields.

Our overall commitment to our employees is a key to Gwinnett County Public Schools being named as one of the best places to work in metro Atlanta and Gwinnett County, year after year. It is important for you as an employee to learn more about this outstanding organization and matters that affect you on the job. Effective policies and practices support our daily work and contribute to the school district’s recognition as a great place to work. This handbook highlights opportunities available to GCPS employees, communicates compensation and benefits information, and summarizes Gwinnett County Board of Education policies and procedures. Our school system website, and the Staff Portal also serve as critical resources, providing access to policies, forms, general information, and more. Use these resources and other information available to you to become an informed and engaged employee.

Again, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude for joining Team GCPS and for all you will do to support Gwinnett County students. Your work makes a significant difference in the lives of children and has a positive impact on the future of Gwinnett County, our state, and our nation. Whether you are a teacher or someone who supports those who teach, the work you do touches the lives of our students and the promise they hold for a bright future!

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS OF GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) has earned a reputation as a high-performing school district that provides a quality and effective education for every student. Sustaining that success requires the district to continuously review where it is today and envision what the organization must be in the future. In 2014, GCPS revisited its vision, mission, and strategic goals to ensure they are relevant and resonate with those who live in Gwinnett today. Overall, stakeholders indicated that these foundational components have served GCPS well over the years, helping to keep the focus on the main thing— teaching and learning. That said, the updated version of these foundational components reflects several suggestions received through the review process. We encourage you to become familiar with our strategic direction and to learn more about our vision of becoming a system of world-class schools. Following, find the updated foundational elements of Gwinnett County Public Schools:

GCPS' Vision: What we aspire to be...

Gwinnett County Public Schools will become a system of world-class schools where students acquire the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and careers.

GCPS' Mission: Why we exist, our core business...

The mission of Gwinnett County Public Schools is to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior for each student, resulting in measured improvement against local, national, and world-class standards.

Blueprint for the Future

In 2021, the Gwinnett County Board of Education appointed a new superintendent for the Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) after twenty-five years of leadership that built the district's reputation as a world-class organization recognized across the state and nation. GCPS has a legacy of performance and innovation that has prevailed for over two decades and directly contributed to the county's economic growth over that time. Since 2000, Gwinnett has become one of the most diverse counties in the United States, while the school system grew to be the largest in the state of Georgia and the 11th largest in the country. The diversity of the larger community is also reflected in the school system.

With an enrollment of over 180,000 students, GCPS includes families that speak over 100 different languages and dialects, with 24% of our students considered English Learners. Over 80% of our students identify as part of communities of color, including Black, Hispanic, Asian Pacific Islander, and Native American. This diversity is a fact and a strength. Gwinnett County and GCPS truly reflect the demographic shifts experienced across the country, and, therefore, we have a unique opportunity to become a national model of a high-performing district serving an incredibly diverse student population.

The Blueprint is designed to ensure our Portrait of a Graduate becomes a reality. The Blueprint will also drive the intentional culture shifts that reflect the guiding vision of the Learning 2025 community of practice. Our Blueprint for the Future defines our strategic priorities in four areas: empathy, equity, effectiveness, and excellence. We know that empathy is key to our understanding of others and to creating a powerful sense of belonging in our GCPS culture. Empathy is a gateway to equity – ensuring that each and every child has what they need to reach their full potential. Effectiveness is our ability to achieve the results we desire. Equity and effectiveness form the bridge from empathy to excellence. Our district will demonstrate excellence in our work – that notable standard to which we should all aspire, behaviorally, academically, and operationally.

What does 'World-Class' mean?

In Gwinnett County Public Schools, "world-class" describes any product, service, or organization that is judged by qualitative and quantitative measures as one of the best in its class, and is recognized accordingly by customers, stakeholders, professional peers, and competitors alike. Characteristics of a world-class school include:

- Rigorous academic standards and high expectations for all students.
- A comprehensive, challenging, and relevant curriculum.
- Effective, engaging instructional strategies.
- Reliable, appropriate, and meaningful assessments.
- High-performing and inspiring employees committed to professional development, training, and lifelong learning.
- A safe, secure, positive learning environment.
- A culture of continuous improvement.
- Accountability for results at all levels.
- Productive and engaging partnerships with families and the community.
- Effective use of technological resources to advance teaching and learning.
- Innovative and productive approaches to management, operations, and use of resources.
- Behavioral standards that promote teaching and learning.
- An inclusive environment that acknowledges and values differences and encourages positive interactions between members of a diverse community.
- Students who are prepared for the next grade level and graduate ready for college and careers.
- Communication with internal and external audiences as a priority.
- A shared vision for success.

Core Beliefs and Commitments of the Gwinnett County Board of Education (Updated 3/17/16)

Believing, as we do, that public education is an integral part of the seamless fabric of the American experience, we, the Gwinnett County Board of Education, derive our core beliefs and commitments for public education in Gwinnett County from the foundational principles of the United States of America, specifically those espoused in the Declaration of Independence. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness," and "That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed..."

America's public schools exist to undergird and advance these principles. They are the one place where all children and youth in our great, diverse country are provided a common, free education. They must educate every child for success in life and for the responsibilities of American citizenship.

Thus, we commit ourselves to a world-class education that meets the needs of individual students, to a sharp focus on the traditions and values at the heart of our constitutional democracy and the rule of law, and to the civic virtues that bind together communities of many cultures, faiths, viewpoints, interests, and histories into a unified nation. *E pluribus unum*. Out of many, one.

Therefore, the Gwinnett County Board of Education will:

- Ensure our core business of teaching and learning is built on a rigorous curriculum, effective instruction, and high-value assessments.
- Educate every student to world-class standards and individual potential.
- Provide a safe and secure learning environment.
- Optimize the school effect to have a positive impact on every child.
- Govern the district fairly and openly, seeking the engagement of the many stakeholders we serve.

INTRODUCTION TO GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

As Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) strives to become a system of world-class schools, we pride ourselves on our continuous quality improvement initiatives regarding our Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) standards, classroom instruction, support for students, professional development for our workforce, GCPS' accountability system, technology and digital resources, maintenance of our facilities, and the district's fiscal management.

Gwinnett County Public Schools is the largest school system in the state of Georgia and 11th largest in the country, with a projected enrollment of 182,707 students for the 2024-25 school year. Made up of 143 schools, GCPS has 81 elementary schools, 29 middle schools, 24 high schools, one charter school, and eight other special schools.

Gwinnett County Public Schools is financially sound, with a FY2025 budget of \$3.2 billion. On average, the cost of educating one child in GCPS is \$13,825 per year. The direct costs of instruction account for 81% of that amount.

GCPS has received the highest possible bond rating (AAA) from the nation's two leading rating agencies. Gwinnett is one of only 24 school districts nationwide and just three in Georgia to hold this distinction, evidence of the district's stellar financial stewardship.

Gwinnett County Public Schools is the largest employer in Gwinnett County, employing more than 23,000 benefit-eligible staff members. The district also employs a pool of more than 4,000 substitutes. GCPS takes pride in its veteran professional educators. In FY2025, our average teacher will hold a master's degree or higher advanced degree and have 13 years of teaching experience.

With our highly qualified workforce, we prepare our students for the future. The vast majority of 2024 graduates (76%) planned postsecondary studies. Seniors were offered more than \$242.2 million in scholarships, not including HOPE and National Merit scholarships. Nine student leaders were offered appointments to a U.S. military service academy. Kudos to 7 Gates Scholars, 9 Posse Scholars, 31 QuestBridge National College Match Scholarship recipients, 1,968 students with credentials and certificates earned through our career and technical education programs, and 8 seniors with appointments to one of the nation's military service academies!

GCPS is a three-time finalist (2009, 2010 and 2014) and two-time winner (2010 and 2014) of The Broad Prize for Urban Education! District honors include a nod as one of the country's best communities for music education and a CyberStart District of Distinction; international, national, and state wins for students and teams in language arts, mathematics, science, history, research, foreign language, visual and performing arts, academic team, engineering, leadership, community service, robotics, music technology, public speaking, writing for the stage, JROTC, design, personal finance, video production, application development, computer science, construction and automotive skills, entrepreneurship, business and marketing, hospitality and tourism, healthcare, firefighting, and culinary arts; national counseling recognition for 34 schools since 2008, including 15 repeats and four awards with distinction; kudos for recruitment reporting and web marketing, bus safety, procurement practices, and financial reporting; eight PBIS Distinguished Schools; 11 state-certified STEM/STEAM schools and programs, with others seeking certification and all schools offering STEM/STEAM instruction; the #1-ranked high school in Georgia (#9 in U.S.) a Georgia Military Flagship School; 18 Common Sense Media Schools promoting digital citizenship; 23 AP Honor Schools, recognized in both STEM subjects and the humanities, graduates earning the state's Biliteracy Seal; recognition of SROs and a bus driver for crisis response; U.S., state, and metro honors for staff for photography, innovative teaching, media services, and foreign language, fine arts, business, marketing, and computer science instruction; state and national honors for schools and programs for media services, online instruction, learning impact, school nutrition, and arts integration; nationally Board Certified teachers and 55 nationally certified counselors; national certification for 19 CTE programs; 21 Georgia Scholars and 187 students selected for the Governor's Honors Program; state and national communication awards, including two GSPRA Best in Category Awards, 10 GSPRA Gold Awards, five NSPRA Awards of Excellence, three NSPRA Awards of Merit, and an EMMY Award; 15 state championships in 2022-23, including three in adapted sports and two in eSports, and kudos for sportsmanship and award-winning student athletes; hundreds of awards for graduates; nearly \$200,000 awarded in scholarships through the Foundation; recognition for fundraising; staff, students, and parents serving on local, state, and national advisory councils; staff and students leading state and national organizations; and county honors for top teachers, counselors, social worker, media center staff, transportation staff, exemplary custodians, and advocates.

For more information about GCPS, please visit the [Gwinnett County Public Schools](#) website.

COMMUNICATION WITH EMPLOYEES AND THE COMMUNITY

Employees' achievements and best practices in the classroom are recognized through internal communication vehicles, including digital staff newsletters such as *Education Briefs*; GCPS' digital and print publications for the community such as GCPS Links, Connected and Essentials, the district's website; the Employee Portal; GCPS' social media accounts on X, Facebook, and Instagram and GCPS TV (available on cable television stations, on the web, and the GCPS TV app). In addition, employee achievements at the state and national level may be publicized through news releases prepared by the Department of Communications and Media Relations for distribution to all metro-area media. Any employee may submit information for recognition by sending it to the Department of Communications and Media Relations at the J. Alvin Wilbanks Instructional Support Center (ISC) or submitting information or a story idea via the designated form on the district website. GCPS is the recipient of state and national communication awards, including NSPRA Awards of Excellence and EMMY and Telly awards.

The Teacher Advisory Council (TAC)—composed of one teacher representative from each school—and the Local School Administrators Association (LSAA), an organization of principals and assistant principals, meet with the Superintendent at various times during the school year. In addition, Cross-Functional Action Teams, or XFATs, are convened to address specific concerns or solve problems collaboratively. Middle and high school students serve on the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council. Individuals representing a cross-section of our community have been actively involved in the district's strategic planning process and our work to develop GCPS' Portrait of a Graduate.

During budget preparation, Gwinnett County Public Schools provides employees with opportunities for input on financial matters through several channels. Any employee may give input on the budget by attending the School Board's public hearings or by sending recommendations to the district's Budget Office.

Parents and citizens have direct channels to provide input to their School Board representatives through attendance at monthly Board business meetings, annual area board meetings, and via emails to the Board as a body or to an individual Board member's email address. Gwinnett County Public Schools shares information through the printed parent newsletter, *Essentials*, and regular e-newsletters; via the district's website and the employee and parent portals; with GCPS' social media presence (Facebook, X, and Instagram) and with original programming on GCPS TV, including "Coffee with Calvin," a monthly show with the superintendent.

ParentSquare is the notification system used by GCPS to contact families and employees via voicemail, text messages, app notifications, and email. The district uses the system to communicate information about districtwide events, including safety alerts and school closings due to inclement weather. Schools also use the system to communicate general/non-emergency information related to school events and attendance messages via email.

Each year, to help improve our schools, Gwinnett County Public Schools collects feedback from our families, students, and staff members about their school experience. Staff surveys are emailed to each staff member with information and deadlines for responses.

Ongoing, two-way communication between the school system and its internal and external audiences and positive media relations are a continued focus for Gwinnett County Public Schools.

Employee Recognition

Gwinnett County Public Schools employees frequently receive recognition for awards and various national, state, and local accomplishments. Professional associations regularly recognize GCPS teachers for their excellence. Additionally, each school chooses a Teacher of the Year nominee during the fall. From the pool of local school Teachers of the Year, level winners and the GCPS Teacher of the Year are named.

Gwinnett County Public Schools also recognizes its top support staff, including transportation employees, custodial teams, counselors, social workers, and media specialists. Digital newsletters prepared by the Department of Communications and Media Relations highlight employee honors. In addition, the school system shares employee, school, and system accomplishments with the local news media.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Gwinnett County Public Schools employees are selected by a systematic personnel screening process designed to identify highly qualified candidates. This same commitment to quality is reflected in the system plans for the enhancement of the skills and competencies of employees. The Department of Staff Development coordinates professional growth opportunities across the district.

Staff Development

Gwinnett County Public Schools' Office of Staff Development provides high-quality professional learning opportunities and customized support and services designed to advance the system's vision, mission, and goals by enhancing employee performance and developing employee capacity to lead in a system of world-class schools. We are committed to developing, supporting, and implementing research and evidence-based professional learning that is data-informed, student-focused, culturally responsive, and sustainable over time.

Gwinnett County Public Schools offers extensive professional learning opportunities for teachers in content, pedagogy, and processes. The district office curriculum departments and local schools facilitate these opportunities. Teachers have multiple venues for gaining the knowledge and skills necessary to provide impactful instruction that meet the needs of each and every student. Staff Development and partner with local schools to ensure teachers receive differentiated, ongoing-professional learning.

Additionally, Staff Development coordinates special programs to meet the specific needs of teachers and staff throughout the district.

- **Teach Gwinnett**, a Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (GaTAPP), is a certification program for teachers seeking initial certification. Teach Gwinnett provides the professional learning and support needed to ensure that beginning teachers are fully equipped to be successful and positively impact student learning.
- **Coach Endorsement** is a program designed for teacher leaders concentrating on research-based coaching practices proven successful in supporting teachers and leading change within schools.
- **Mentor Gwinnett program** is a district-wide, supplemental program for teacher leaders serving as mentors. Specific professional learning and induction processes are implemented in local schools to provide comprehensive support to new teachers and to ensure they develop the knowledge and skills necessary to impact student learning.
- **Support Staff Development** provides instructional services designed to increase support staff's knowledge, skills, and overall performance. The program offers courses on workplace dynamics, working with teams, professional growth, and job-related competencies.
- **Teacher As Leaders** participants are introduced to a core curriculum of leadership principles and provided opportunities to explore leadership skills through a retreat and a series of program days, including meeting with local, state, and national leaders in education.
- **Teacher Leader Series** is available to all teacher leaders. This five-part series equips teacher leaders with the knowledge and skills to lead and coach effective collaborative practices.
- **Educational Equity and Responsiveness** provides professional development pathways designed to push your thinking and increase exposure to culturally responsive teaching and learning philosophies and practices that support educator effectiveness and ensure student success.

District Endorsements:

- Coach
- Computer Science
- ESOL
- Gifted
- Math
- Physical and Health Disabilities Endorsement Program
- STEM
- Visual Impairment

Alternate Certification Pathway:

- GaTAPP (Teach Gwinnett)

Our District's Lifelong Learning Commitment

In alignment with our belief that learning is a lifelong journey, our district has implemented [Board Policy GAD](#). This policy mandates that all GCPS employees must earn 20 staff development hours annually.

These hours should directly support the district's vision, mission, and goals, as well as LSPI goals, RBES goals and/or the employee's certification area. The hours can be earned through:

- Local school staff development sessions.
- District-sponsored opportunities.
- External offerings from approved agencies.

To find and register for upcoming district-wide staff development opportunities, please visit the Employee Portal, and click on the PD&E icon. For further assistance, you can contact the Staff Development Department at 678-301-7095.

Leadership Development

Research shows that effective leadership is second only to effective teaching in its positive impact on student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2004; Grissom, Egalite, and Lindsay, 2021). Studies also affirm that districts with a formal leadership pipeline demonstrate improved student performance (Gates et al., 2019). Housed within the Division of Human Resources, Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) Office of Leadership Development has a rich history of supporting the training and development of school leaders through its own pipeline, the Quality Plus Leader Academy (QPLA).

QPLA has three major programs:

These include the Aspiring Principal Program, Aspiring Leader Program, and the District Leader Program.

- The **Aspiring Leader Program** prepares emerging leaders at the teacher level for assistant principal roles through a six-month academy. The Aspiring Leader Program has trained assistant principals serving in 97% of GCPS schools.
- The **Aspiring Principal Program** is a selective year-long program that prepares high-potential assistant principals and district leaders to be the next generation of effective GCPS principals through learning sessions, case studies, leadership simulations, and a residency experience with veteran principals. APP has trained principals serving in 92% of GCPS' schools.
- The **District Leader Program** ensures that GCPS has well-qualified leaders at the district office and that newly appointed district-level leaders have the foundational knowledge needed to serve the system effectively in their new roles.

The Office of Leadership Development continues to provide support for leaders once appointed to a position. Coaching support is provided for first through second-year principals and first through second-year assistant principals. Other leadership training includes Professional Learning Opportunities (PLOs) for new and veteran principals and assistant principals, Just-In-Time (JIT) training and Ask The Expert (ATE) opportunities for new principals and assistant principals. This office also provides assistance through Leadership Symposiums and other local school and district level Leadership Support Service. Additionally, Leadership Development plans, organizes, and directs the district's annual Summer Leadership Conference (SLC), the signature learning event for school and district-level leaders in GCPS. The office also collaborates with partner universities to provide cohort preparation and certification programs specific to the district's needs.

For more information about these programs, please visit the [Leadership Development website](#).

Performance Appraisal

Gwinnett County Public Schools is committed to performance assessment that encourages continuous quality improvement for all employees. All personnel shall have their performance evaluated annually as required by Georgia Code § 20-2-210. Certified educators are assessed using the Gwinnett Teacher Effectiveness System, the Gwinnett Leader Effectiveness System, the Gwinnett Educator Effectiveness System, or other appropriate evaluation programs as determined by the district. Classified employees are assessed using a Job Description Assessment.

Certification

It is the responsibility of all certified employees to obtain and maintain valid in-field Georgia certification. Employees may contact the Certification Department at 678-301-6165 for certification forms and requirements.

All paraprofessionals and media clerks must hold a Paraprofessional Certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC). Certification requirements are found on the [GaPSC](#) website.

Questions regarding certification should be directed to the Certification Department at 678-301-6165.

Licensing

All vehicle operators covered by the commercial driver's licensing laws must have a valid Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and must complete the training course prescribed by the State Department of Transportation and Gwinnett County Public Schools and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). Other specialized positions may also require licensing.

BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

Benefits are a large part of the total compensation package for Gwinnett County Public School employees. To meet the changing needs of our employees, we are continuously reviewing and updating these benefits and their features. The following is an overview of the benefits provided by GCPS. Because of the importance of the benefits package, we encourage you to familiarize yourself with the details of the various plans from a variety of sources, including the *GCPS New Hire Guide* and the *State Health Benefit Plan Decision Guide*. These publications, along with other detailed information, can be found on the [GCPS Benefits](#) website.

Open Enrollment (OE) is the annual period when employees may enroll or change options or coverage, subject to the conditions described in the plan. The OE period, unless otherwise announced, occurs mid-October through mid-November of each calendar year. Coverage changes or enrollments become effective the following January 1.

It is the responsibility of the employee to notify the Benefits and Leave Administration Office of any changes in the number of dependents and/or the names of beneficiaries.

Insurance benefits become effective on the first day of the month following the completion of one full calendar month of employment. Temporary employees (substitutes and miscellaneous employees) or employees who work less than 20 hours per week are not eligible for benefits.

A Section 125 Plan Document, posted on the internal website, governs the BOE. Employer-sponsored benefits plans allow employees to pay for qualified insurance premiums on a pre-tax basis. Contributions to the cafeteria plan are before taxes and taken out of an employee's paycheck.

If deductions cannot occur on the paycheck due to lack of funds or leave of absence status, impacted employees must pay premiums directly to the district, and may pay directly for a maximum of 12 months. If premiums are not paid, coverage is subject to termination. An employee with an insufficient paycheck will have two weeks from the notification date to pay direct for benefits that were not deducted. For employees on a leave of absence without pay, premiums are due by the last day of the month for the next month's coverage.

Health Insurance is maintained by the Georgia Department of Community Health also known as the State Health Benefit Plan. The district complies with all rules and regulations set forth by the agency.

Accident Insurance

Accident Insurance complements traditional health coverage by providing a lump sum payment that can help pay expenses not typically covered by other insurance. The payment can be used to off-set medical deductibles, out-of-pocket maximums, and/or living expenses. Employees have a choice of two comprehensive plan options which provide payments in addition to any other insurance payments employees may receive.

Behavioral Health & Counseling

Behavioral Health and Counseling services are available to all benefit-eligible employees. Professional counseling services are offered for a loss or major life change, at no cost to the employee, for up to five sessions per life event. Sessions are provided face-to-face or via telephone or video chat for each member of the household.

Critical Illness Insurance

Employees may enroll in the Critical Illness insurance plan, which supplements health care by helping with costs associated with a critical illness. Benefits are paid directly to the employee in a lump sum when a diagnosis of a covered illness is confirmed. Coverage amounts are \$15,000, \$30,000, and \$50,000. Rates are age-banded and are not changed once enrolled in the plan.

Dental Insurance

Dental coverage may be purchased for the individual employee and employee's eligible family members. Two plans are available: Basic or Premium Direct Reimbursement. Both plans offer a voluntary MetLife network of preferred dental providers. The Premium plan also offers orthodontia benefits. Late entrant restrictions may apply to employees who decline enrollment at the time of hire and enroll through a subsequent Open Enrollment, or for those employees who dropped dental coverage and re-elected coverage at a later Open Enrollment.

Disability Insurance

Short-Term Disability coverage is available with three levels of coverage: Basic (\$225 weekly benefit), Plan A (\$300 weekly benefit), and Plan B (\$500 weekly benefit). The weekly salary benefit may not exceed two-thirds of an employee's current salary. Short-Term Disability benefits begin the 15th day of disability and may continue for up to 180 days, provided an appropriate health care provider certifies the disability. Childbirth and complications of pregnancies are also covered. Short-Term Disability benefits may be received in conjunction with accrued leave usage. An employee must have paid six-monthly premiums to receive benefits for a medical disability.

GCPS employees contribute 1% of their salary to the Gwinnett Retirement System (GRS) for mandatory Long-Term Disability coverage. If disabled, employee will be entitled to a monthly income equal to one-twelfth of sixty percent (60%) of earnings for the 12-month period preceding the disability.

Disability Income Benefits will be the amounts necessary, when added to benefits available under other plans, to provide the 60% benefit level. Other plans include the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia, the Public-School Employees Retirement System of Georgia, Workers' Compensation, Social Security, and any successors thereto. Employees must first apply for benefits from such other plans. Employees must apply for such benefits, otherwise no Disability Income Benefits are payable or will accrue under the Plan.

Disability Income Benefits will begin on the first day of the month following the completion of the last of the following conditions:

- You must have completed a leave of absence lasting 180 consecutive days from the first day you were absent from employment based on your disability.
- You must have been determined to meet the Plan's definition of disability.
- You must have exhausted all other paid absence benefits, including short-term disability payments, sick leave payments, and paid vacation.

Complete information about the Long-Term Disability plan and GRS is available on the [GCPS Retirement Services Department](#) website.

Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA)

Employees may deduct up to the maximum allowable amount as designated by the Internal Revenue Service in pre-tax dollars per plan year to pay for eligible non-reimbursed health care expenses. Employees may deduct up to \$5,000 in pre-tax dollars per plan year to pay for qualifying dependent care expenses. Special care must be taken in predicting out-of-pocket expenses for either the health care or dependent care plans as any unused portion of both FSA will be forfeited at the end of the plan year. The entire election for the healthcare FSA is available on the first day of the plan year as services are provided. Dependent care expenses are reimbursed up to the accumulated payroll deductions as services are provided. Detailed information on both FSA plans and lists of eligible expenses can be found on the [GCPS Benefits](#) website.

Health Insurance

Benefit-eligible employees have the opportunity to enroll in group health insurance provided by the State Health Benefit Plan. Information on the health plan is available from the Benefits and Leave Administration Office or the [GCPS Benefits](#) website.

GCPS Total Package

The Gwinnett County Board of Education provides additional compensation to employees in the form of employer-paid portions of insurance, retirement contributions, and accumulated leave that can add to an employee's actual salary.

The GCPS Total Package illustrates what the Board of Education pays on your behalf for benefits. It is a summary of the value-added compensation provided by the Board towards an employee's various benefits, retirement, and other payroll taxes, such as workers compensation and Medicare. It also provides the value of the accrued leave you earn each year.

The GCPS Total Package is not available for non-benefit eligible employees such as Temporary/Miscellaneous employees, Substitutes, or Retirees. Employees can locate the individualized GCPS Total Package in the [Employee Portal](#) under the About Me tab>Benefits>GCPS Total Package.

Home and Auto Insurance

Coverage for Home and Auto insurance is available for all benefit-eligible employees through Farmers Insurance as a monthly payroll deduction. A discount is applied based on payroll deduction and tenure with the district.

Hospital Indemnity Insurance

Hospital Indemnity insurance complements traditional health coverage by providing a lump sum payment that can help pay expenses not typically covered by other insurance. The payment can be used to off-set medical deductibles, out-of-pocket maximums, and/or living expenses. Employees have a choice of two comprehensive plan options which provide payments in addition to any other insurance payments employees may receive.

Legal Insurance

Benefits include legal representation, over the phone or face-to-face, telephone legal advice and consultation, reduced fee services, online legal tools and resources, identity theft services, immigration assistance, and financial education and counseling services.

Employees may enroll in their choice of two plans. Both plans provide access to professional legal assistance for employees and family members.

- The [Law Phone Plan](#) provides toll-free telephone access to a network attorney for help with legal questions.
- The [Ultimate Advisor Plan](#) is a comprehensive service that provides face-to-face consultation and legal assistance.

Life Insurance

Benefit-eligible employees are automatically covered by a \$15,000 group term Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment policy provided by the Board at no cost to the employee and underwritten by MetLife. Additionally, an employee may purchase Supplemental Life insurance up to six times employee's annual salary, up to \$500,000. Spouse and child(ren) may be covered at an additional cost, subject to the plan design.

Medicare

All employees hired after April 1, 1986, are required to pay Medicare contributions, which provide the medical benefits within the Social Security Administration. Employees hired prior to April 1, 1986, with no break-in-service do not pay Medicare contributions and, as such, may be required to pay for Medicare (Part A) coverage upon retirement through the Social Security Administration.

Vision Insurance

Vision coverage may be purchased for the individual employee and employee's eligible family members. Vision insurance covers the cost of eye exams and other services and materials through the EyeMed vision care network. Using in-network providers allow enrollees to receive care at no cost or minimal out-of-pocket expense. The plan also includes an out-of-network benefit that allows enrollees to use any eye care professional. The out-of-network feature reimburses 50% of eligible expenses up to a total reimbursement of \$300.

A complete description of services provided by the above plans is available by accessing the [GCPS Benefits](#) website.

ADDITIONAL GCPS BENEFITS

Peach State Federal Credit Union

As an employee with Gwinnett County Public Schools, you and your family members qualify for membership in Peach State Federal Credit Union. As a convenience for employees of GCPS, payroll deductions are provided upon request for contributions or payments to the Peach State Federal Credit Union. For more information and telephone numbers, please visit the [Peach State Federal Credit Union](#) website.

GCPS Foundation

The Gwinnett County Public Schools Foundation Fund is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) charitable organization dedicated to providing financial resources to enrich and enhance education in Gwinnett County Public Schools. Located at the ISC, the Foundation's mission is to sustain excellent standards by strengthening internal and external community relationships providing resources and support to improve the educational future of our students. [The GCPS Foundation website](#), [Facebook](#), and [X](#) offer the latest Foundation events, news, student scholarships/teacher grants, and the popular employee perks!

Love a discount?

Gwinnett County Public Schools is the largest employer in the county and among the largest in the metro area. As a result, employees of the district have access to a number of special programs and offers not available to the public – sporting events, entertainment, cell service, mortgages, florist, auto, electronics, banking, and more. In addition, foundation partners often donate back to the schools and the district through these offers. You can help too by informing businesses of the **Community Partnership Program** offered through the GCPS Foundation. Direct interested parties to contact the GCPS Foundation office at 678-301-7287.

COMPENSATION ADMINISTRATION

Gwinnett County Public Schools provides employees with a total compensation package that is regionally competitive in order to recruit, employ, develop, and retain a highly qualified work force. We believe that the high quality of our personnel is the single most important factor in continuing to provide a quality education for the students in our community. The Compensation Office is committed to ensuring competitive wages for all employees while also maintaining internal and external pay equity. The Compensation Office produces annual salary schedules and work calendars for all GCPs employees and generates over 12,000 employment contracts annually, which are provided to employees electronically via the Employee Portal.

Employee Personal Data Changes

It is the responsibility of employees to inform the Division of Human Resources of any change in name, home address, and/or phone number. Employees may update their name, personal address, and phone number online via the [Employee Portal](#) at any time. Name change requests must be accompanied by a copy of the signed social security card reflecting the new name before the request may be completed.

Pay Statement/Direct Deposit

Employees may access and update the following payroll items online via the [Employee Portal](#).

- Pay Statements
- Direct Deposit
- Tax Withholding
- W2's

Penalty for Failure to Provide Certification

The employment contracts issued to certified staff are contingent upon the employee securing and continuing to hold a valid in-field certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. Salary adjustments may be made to conform to the certificate level approved by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. If an employee is unable to be certified properly, the daily rate of pay may be adjusted to that of a substitute teacher retroactive to the beginning of employment under the contract.

Penalty for Failure to Meet Contractual Obligation

If fewer than 20 days of service are rendered under contract, the daily rate may be equal to the substitute teacher pay rate.

Vacations

Benefit-eligible 12-month employees accumulate vacation on a monthly basis. An employee must be at work or on paid leave 13 working days within a month in order to earn vacation leave. Employees working 20 or more hours per week, but less than 40 hours per week, will earn a pro-rated share of vacation leave.

Employees who earn vacation will accumulate hours based on the schedule below:

Continuous Years of Service in GCPS	Time Accumulated Each Year
Years 1 – 5	96 hours (12 days)
Years 6 – 10	120 hours (15 days)
Years 11 – 15	144 hours (18 days)
Years 16 – 20	160 hours (20 days)
Over 20 years	184 hours (23 days)

- Vacation leave may be accumulated to a maximum of 25 times an employee's monthly accrual amount. When the maximum is reached, additional vacation accumulation is not possible.
- All vacation leave is subject to approval by the principal or program manager.

Holidays

Other employees follow the holiday schedule on the annual GCPS Employee Calendar.

- New Year's Day (1)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day (1)
- Spring Holiday (1)
- Memorial Day (1)
- Juneteenth (1)
- Independence Day (1)
- Labor Day (1)
- Thanksgiving (2)
- Winter Holidays (See Calendar)

Visit the [Compensation Center](#) website, where additional information, such as: Salary Schedules, Verification of GCPS Employment, Verification of Previous Employment, Employee Work Calendars, and more are provided.

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS


The Department Employee Relations ensures the equitable administration of applicable federal, state, and GCPS regulations and laws impacting the GCPS community and fosters positive relationships between the school system and its students and employees. The Department Employee Relations also manages the complaint and appeal processes and responds to inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies, investigates employee, student, and community complaints of discrimination or harassment, and processes accommodation requests. In addition, it facilitates compliance with legal requirements associated with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, Age Discrimination in Employment Act, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Age Discrimination Act, Titles I and II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act. Questions regarding discrimination may be addressed to either U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, depending on the status of the complainant.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, disability, or age in its programs, activities, or employment practices. GCPS is expressly prohibited from subjecting any person to discrimination or harassment on the basis of employee's membership in a protected class by the following laws: Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title I and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008.

Annual Compliance Training

All GCPS employees are required to complete annual compliance training in the areas of Title IX Equity and Compliance and Security Awareness. Some school-based employees are also required to complete Safety and Security training on an annual basis. The training listed below is conducted through PD&E on the employee portal:

- **Title IX Equity and Compliance** training is an annual requirement for all GCPS employees and is the district's primary means of ensuring that employees are aware of laws and regulations related to mandatory reporting, suicide prevention, ethics, sexual harassment, and seclusion and restraint.
- The **Cybersecurity Awareness Education Program** is aimed at helping school system employees better safeguard the information entrusted to us by students, families, and staff members. The mandatory program consists of a series of online courses that provide practical information on how to recognize and respond appropriately to cybersecurity threats. To access this training, log on to the [Employee Portal](#) and click the Cybersecurity Awareness  Icon.
- **Safety & Security Training** is an annual requirement of some school-based employees, depending on position. This training ensures that school-based staff are aware of critical information related to keeping local schools safe and secure.

For more resources, please visit the [Department of Employee Relations](#) website.

LEAVE ADMINISTRATION

Gwinnett County Public Schools recognizes that our employees will encounter personal situations that may require time away from their job. Our leave options are designed to not only be flexible and consistent with employee needs but also to comply with state and federal laws.

Leave of absence may be used for the following reasons:

- Employee's personal disability
- Paternity
- Adoption
- Guardianship
- Military leave
- Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- Workers' Compensation
- Paid Parental Leave

Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) can also be taken intermittently versus in one continuous block. Employees may take FMLA intermittently or on a reduced schedule when medically necessary or otherwise permitted. Employees seeking intermittent leave are not required to be absent for ten consecutive days.

Leave of absence taken in a continuous block is defined as leave taken more than ten consecutive working days through the approved leave period, or until leave options have been exhausted. Employees must complete a "Leave Request Form" and provide supporting documentation.

Extended Leave of Absence

- Employees who have completed at least three full years of consecutive service with GCPS are eligible for an extended leave of absence.
- No extended leaves of absence may exceed one calendar year unless approved by the CEO/Superintendent.
- Extended leaves may be granted for educational leave, health, childcare, military, and political leave.
- Employees are entitled to return to active employment, contingent upon a vacancy in the field in which they were employed at the time leave was granted.
- Employees must return to active payroll status for one full calendar year before requesting an additional extended leave of absence.

Family and Medical Leave Act

GCPS is in full compliance with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993. **To be eligible for FMLA, an employee must have been employed by the district for at least 12 months and must have worked at least 1,250 hours during the prior twelve-month period.**

The FMLA may grant qualified employees 60 working days of unpaid leave every twelve months, which may be used for the following purposes:

- Birth of a child
- Adoption of a child or the placement of a foster child
- Care for a sick spouse, child, or parent
- Employee's own serious health condition
- Military

An eligible employee who is a covered service member's spouse, child, parent, or next of kin may also take up to 26 weeks of FMLA leave in a single 12-month period to care for the service member with a serious injury or illness.

The district requires that any leave request based on a family member's health condition, the employee's own health condition, or military caregiver status, be supported by the appropriate FMLA form. Additionally, an approved health care provider's release to return to work will be required for all employees who were on leave due to their own health condition.

The employee must provide at least 30-day notice of the employee's intention to take leave when possible. The employee should make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment in a manner that will not overly disrupt the operations of the district. With limited exceptions, any eligible employee who takes leave under FMLA is entitled to be restored to employee's job or an equivalent position. The district may, under certain circumstances, request that an employee "recertify" employee's serious health condition or the serious health condition of employee's family member within the same leave year. In general, an employer may request the employee provide recertification no more than every 30 days and only when the employee is actually absent or has requested to be absent. The district may contact the employee's health care provider to authenticate or clarify the fitness-for-duty certification.

Detailed information concerning FMLA is available through the [GCPS Policies](#) website and the Benefits and Leave Administration Office.

For any additional information, please contact the Leave Department at Leave@gcpsk12.org.

Jury Duty, Subpoena, and Other Court Order

All district employees shall be allowed leave without loss of pay when they respond to a summons for jury duty or attend a judicial proceeding in response to a job-related subpoena.

Employees with jury duty shall not have the jury leave deducted from sick or personal leave, and no employee using legal leave shall be required to pay the cost of employing a substitute. Employees may also retain juror compensation.

Military Duty Leave

Employees will be paid for a maximum period of 18 working days, per federal fiscal year, for ordered military duty as defined in Georgia Code § 38-2-279, and while going to and returning from such duty.

Paid Parental Leave

Employees may be eligible for paid parental leave for qualifying life events, such birth, adoption, or placement of a foster child. The maximum amount of leave that may be taken by an eligible employee during a rolling 12-month period is 240 hours (30 workdays), regardless of the number of qualifying life events that occur within such period. Such leave must be taken within 12 months of the qualifying event.

Personal Disability Leave

Except in emergency cases, a completed Leave Request Form, accompanied by a healthcare provider's statement, must be submitted to the Benefits and Leave Administration Office at least 30 days before the anticipated date of disability. Childbirth is classified as a disability.

If an employee wishes to discontinue work before the anticipated date of disability, the employee must notify, if possible, the Benefits and Leave Administration Office in writing 30 days before the leave is to begin.

If an employee has been absent 10 consecutive working days and has not notified the Benefits and Leave Administration Office by completing a Leave Request Form, along with a written attending healthcare provider's statement or FMLA form certifying the illness and anticipated return to work date, employee's position is subject to being declared vacant and may result in employment termination.

Personal Leave

Up to three days of accumulated sick leave may be used each year for personal or professional reasons. Supervisory approval is required prior to the date of the planned absence. The employee is not required to disclose the specific purpose for the leave. Personal leave may not be taken when the presence of the employee is considered essential for effective school/school system operation. Teachers may not take personal leave on the day before or after a student holiday. Personal leave may not be carried over from year to year; therefore, unused personal leave will be carried over as accumulated sick leave.

Professional Leave for Certified Personnel

An employee may request leave to attend specific professional activities or to receive in-service training. Leave requests must be approved by the supervisor and submitted to the CEO/Superintendent or his/her designee for approval at least two weeks prior to the requested absence. Approval of the request does not commit the system to payment of any expenses. Professional leave may not total more than three days.

Religious Leave

Leave for religious holidays may not exceed three days per fiscal year. The employee should make up the leave at a time mutually agreed upon by the employee and the supervisor.

Returning from Leave

An employee who is returning to work for the beginning of the new school year after extended leave must notify the Division of Human Resources in writing of employee's intention to return for the following school year. Every effort will be made to place an employee in the field held prior to the leave and at the location where the employee worked prior to the leave.

Such placement will depend on the availability of openings. Gwinnett County Board of Education Policy states that an employee "shall be entitled to return to active employment upon written request for reassignment and contingent upon a vacancy in the field in which he/she was employed when the leave was granted." Employees who have been on a leave without pay, not paying direct for benefits, and did not participate in the annual benefits Open Enrollment process, will be contacted by the Benefits and Leave Administration Office regarding the process for making benefit election changes as allowed by the State Health Benefit Plan and GCPS plan document.

When returning from disability leave, the employee must submit to the Benefits and Leave Administration Office and supervisor a release to work statement from the health care provider stating that the employee is able to perform the essential functions of the job. If an employee is released with work restrictions, the work restrictions must be approved by an HR Talent Management Director and Principal/Program Manager.

Sick Leave

Sick leave for full-time employees is earned at the rate of 1.25 days per month multiplied by the number of months worked. Sick leave may be accumulated up to a maximum of 1,200 hours (150 days). An employee must be at work or on paid leave at least 13 working days within a month to earn sick leave for that month. Employees working less than 40 hours per week earn a prorated share of sick leave. Temporary employees (substitutes and miscellaneous employees) or employees who work less than 20 hours per week are not eligible to accrue leave.

With the supervisors' approval, an employee may use sick leave for absences due to the following reasons:

- Illness, injury, or childbirth. Employees may use sick leave during the first six calendar weeks of adoption leave and sick leave can be used for paternity leave for six calendar weeks immediately following the birth of a child. Certification from the adoption agency or the attorney who arranges the adoption is required.
- Exposure to contagious disease necessitated to protect the health of others who might be endangered by employee's attendance.
- Illness, injury, or death in employee's immediate family. Immediate family included employee's spouse, children, grandchildren, parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, in-law equivalents of the above, any relative residing in the employee's home or any dependent as shown in the employee's most recent tax return. This provision also covers in loco parentis relationships.

Employees absent for reasons other than those above or absent after sick leave has been exhausted, shall have their rate of pay adjusted accordingly based on Board [Policy GBRI](#).

Teachers, student services support personnel, administrative or supervisory personnel, and bus drivers who transfer to GCPS from other Georgia public school systems may transfer up to 45 days of sick leave. In accordance with state statute, the transfer of leave must take place within one year of termination from the previous school system.

An employee may donate a total of 10 days of sick leave to employee's spouse, who is also a GCPS employee, if the spouse's sick leave has been exhausted, and the following conditions are met:

- Must be for maternity leave, illness, or death of a family member.
- Both employees must be contributing members of the GCPS Sick Leave Bank; and
- If requested, employees must provide a certificate of illness or death.

Accrued sick leave balances at the time of retirement may be purchased from employees according to current Board policy with the following stipulations:

- Employee must have been employed full time for a minimum of nine months.
- Employee meeting the criteria for sick leave payout will be paid at the rate of \$5.25 per hour. This rate is reviewed annually and may be subject to change.

- Employee must request payment for unused leave within one year or forfeit all monies due; and employees who have transferred sick leave from another Georgia school system must have worked for GCPS for at least one full contract year to be paid for unused sick leave.

Sick Leave Bank

The Sick Leave Bank (SLB) has been established to provide additional sick leave days for employees who have exhausted their accrued leave due to catastrophic or life-threatening personal illness. The SLB is available to Board-approved positions that earn sick leave based on Board [Policy GBRIB](#). Application for Sick Leave Bank benefits shall be made through a completed Sick Leave Bank Benefits Request Form and submitted to the Benefits and Leave Administration Office. The request form must be submitted within 12 months from the beginning date of the disability. For detailed information regarding the SLB, please refer to [Procedure P. GBRIB](#).

For additional resources concerning Leave of Absence, please visit the [Leave](#) website.

RETIREMENT SERVICES

The mission of the Gwinnett Retirement Services Department is to provide Gwinnett County Public Schools' employees and retirees with the information, guidance, support, and service they need to plan and achieve a comfortable, secure, and independent retirement, as well as and to manage the assets of the Plan to ensure the promise of life-long benefits.

The Gwinnett Retirement Services Department offers Gwinnett Retirement System (GRS) counseling services for prospective retirees, assistance to the School District's existing GRS retirees, benefit processing for GRS beneficiaries and information to assist former employees related to their GRS vesting/benefit status. Another key service provided is assistance with the School District's 403(b) & 457(b) retirement savings plans.

Gwinnett Retirement System

Effective January 1, 1983, Gwinnett County Public Schools elected to withdraw from the Social Security System. The Gwinnett Retirement System (GRS) was developed to offer employees benefits comparable to Social Security benefits at a greatly reduced cost to the employee. This plan provides a retirement income that supplements the state retirement programs. Further details can be found on the [Gwinnett Retirement System](#) website.

Some highlights of the Gwinnett plan are:

- Lifetime income at retirement.
- Benefits may increase up to 3% annually based on the cost-of-living index.
- Full benefits begin at age 65.
- Employees are vested after 9 years and 9 months of service. An employee hired before July 1, 2012, who remains continuously active is vested after five years of service.
- Survivor benefits.
- If disabled while employed, an employee can collect benefits which, when added to benefits from other sources, equal 60% of salary.
- Board of Education contributions fund 100% of an employee's GRS retirement benefits, and the employee contributes 1% of earnings to provide for Long-Term Disability coverage.

Teachers Retirement System of Georgia

Teachers, administrators, supervisors, clerical employees, paraprofessionals, and various central office staff are eligible members of the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia (TRS). Benefits become available after 30 years of service, regardless of age, at 25 years of service with early retirement adjustments, or at age 60 after 10 years of service. Employees who have 10 years of TRS service are eligible to apply for disability retirement benefits if permanently disabled, as well as survivor's benefits that are paid to a beneficiary. TRS retirement benefits are funded by a combination of employee and employer contributions. Current contribution rates and additional information about TRS is available on the [Teachers Retirement System of Georgia](#) website.

Public School Employees Retirement System of Georgia

Bus drivers, food service employees, some non-supervisory maintenance and custodial personnel, and other employees not eligible for membership in TRS are eligible for membership in the Public School Employees' Retirement System of Georgia (PSERS). For members with at least 10 years of creditable service, normal retirement benefits may commence at age 65, and reduced early retirement benefits may commence as early as age 60. Members hired before July 1, 2012, contribute \$4.00 per month for nine months each year. Members hired or rehired on or after July 1, 2012, contribute \$10.00 per month for nine months each year. The state makes the employer's contribution. Further information is available on the [Employees' Retirement System of Georgia](#) website.

For additional information regarding GCPS' Retirement services, please visit the [Retirement website](#).

RISK MANAGEMENT

Liability Insurance

The Board of Education provides professional liability insurance for its employees, which may provide for legal expenses and damages that may arise from suits brought against employees for incidents that occur while they are carrying out assigned duties of the district.

Workers' Compensation

Employees may be entitled to Workers' Compensation benefits if injured on the job. The injury must arise out of and in the course of employment. The injured employee must provide notice of the injury immediately, but no later than 30 days after the accident, to the employer, the employer's representative, or the employee's immediate supervisor. Failure to do so may result in the loss of benefits. The injured employee may select a medical care provider from the [Panel of Physicians](#) posted by the Board of Education. Only those providers listed are authorized to provide medical care for a work-related injury. The Panel of Physicians is posted in conspicuous places in all locations maintained by the Board of Education and may be obtained through the [Risk Management](#) office.

Not every injury that occurs on GCPS premises or during the workday is covered under Workers' Compensation. Generally, employees are not eligible for Workers' Compensation benefits for injuries sustained: going to or coming from work; during deviations from the scope of employment (e.g., employee making a delivery drives to a place unconnected to the employment); as a consequence of imported danger (e.g., an employee's attire or a personal weapon causes injury to self); an employee engaging in a prohibited act; an employee engaging in horseplay; during voluntary participation in recreational or social activities; and during times in which the employee is not subject to the employer's control. Each report of injury is reviewed in detail by Risk Management staff, and a decision on coverage is made based on the available information. Questions may be addressed to an immediate supervisor or the [Risk Management](#) office.

For additional information regarding Liability Insurance and Workers' Compensation, please contact the [Risk Management](#) office.

POLICIES, PROCEDURES & OPERATIONS

Gwinnett County Public Schools recognizes the importance of meeting employee needs and utilizing employee abilities. For effective district operations, it is necessary that sound personnel policies and practices are known and understood by all employees. These policies and practices ensure consistency and fairness for all employees.

This handbook, the salary schedule, and references to the number of days to be worked should not be considered an employment contract. Since it is the responsibility of each employee to understand GCPS Board policies, administrative procedures, and practices, if clarification of information contained is needed, an immediate supervisor should be contacted for assistance. Board policies and procedures summarized in this handbook are meant to provide employees with only a general overview of Board policies and procedures related to personnel. Any policies or procedures on the [GCPS Policies](#) website supersede any content printed in this handbook.

A listing of each section of Board policies may be accessed on the [GCPS Policies](#) website. Employees may also access the Board Policies and Administrative Procedures using the Lotus Notes Database.

Assistant Principal and Teacher Transfer Requests ([Policy GBM](#), [Procedure P.GBM](#))

The Placement Preference Process provides an opportunity for assistant principals and teachers to express interest for a lateral transfer to a different location for the next school year. It is not necessary to determine the existence of a vacancy to list a school as a preference. Principals receive electronic notification regarding all transfer requests to and from their schools. Transfer requests will be considered as principals fill positions for the coming year. Certified teachers and assistant principals must complete their third consecutive, complete, contractual year in the current school to be eligible for a transfer. Detailed information on the process and the deadline for assistant principals and teachers are communicated in the spring.

Complaint Procedures ([Policy GAE](#), [Procedure P.GAE](#))

The purpose of this policy is to provide a way for the Board and its employees to reach solutions to problems, disputes, or controversies that may occur and to provide a mechanism for employees or applicants to complain about unlawful discrimination or harassment. It is the intent of this policy to provide a clear and concise method for the resolution of complaints at the lowest possible administrative level.

This policy may also be used specifically as a procedure by employees who allege discrimination or harassment based on age, sex, race, color, religion, national origin, or disability. In the case of alleged discrimination based on age, sex, race, color, religion, national origin, or disability, employees may report allegations of discrimination or harassment directly to the Local School/Division Title IX Coordinator. Any supervisor who becomes aware of such a complaint should notify the Executive Director of Employee Relations no later than the next business day immediately following employee's knowledge of the complaint.

Please refer to the Gwinnett County Board of Education [Procedure P.GAE](#) for specific steps. Complaint Procedure forms may be obtained from a supervisor or by calling the Office of Employee Relations at 678-301-6811.

Scope of Complaint: Exclusions

This complaint and grievance procedure is applicable to any claim by any employee of the Gwinnett County Board of Education who is affected in employee's employment relationship by an alleged violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of statutes, policies, rules, regulations, or written agreements of this school district or with which the district is required to comply.

Exclusions - Unless the complaint is based on unlawful discrimination, this procedure shall not apply to:

- Performance ratings contained in personnel evaluations and professional development plans.
- Job performance.
- Termination, non-renewal, demotion, suspension, or reprimand of any employee; and/or
- The revocation, suspension, or denial of certificates of any employee.

An employee, who chooses to appeal under O.C.G.A. §20-2-1160, shall be barred from pursuing the same complaint under this policy.

Initiating a Complaint and Requesting a Hearing

In order to resolve matters in a fair, equitable, and expeditious manner, the Board of Education has developed a procedure outlined in [Policy GAE](#). This policy is designed to identify all parties involved, provide timelines, and assist in organizing complaint information.

Contracts

Contracts for certified employees and other Board-approved personnel are issued for no more than one school year. A contract of employment is made between an employee and the Gwinnett County Board of Education for a position within the district.

An employee who is fulfilling a full year contract for the current year must be notified by May 15 if a contract for the ensuing year will not be offered. An employee who holds a contract for less than one full year will not necessarily be offered a full contract for the ensuing year.

Drug-Free Workplace ([Policy GAMA](#), [Procedure P.GAMA](#), [Procedure P.GBU](#))

The Board provides a drug-free workplace and professes that the use of illicit drugs and the unlawful possession and use of tobacco and alcohol are wrong and harmful. The unlawful possession, use, manufacture, distribution, or dispensation of illicit drugs, tobacco, and alcohol by employees on school premises, in school vehicles, or at any school-sponsored activities is prohibited. Compliance with these standards is mandatory. Disciplinary sanctions, up to and including termination of employment and referral for prosecution, will be imposed on employees who violate these prohibitions.

Employees are prohibited from using or displaying drug, alcohol, and tobacco products in front of students while the employee is on duty, during the normal school day, or while on duty at any school-or system-sponsored function.

Drug and Alcohol Testing Procedure ([Policy GCRA](#), [Procedure P.GCRA](#))

In recognition of its responsibilities to take reasonable measures to ensure that the students it undertakes to transport are transported safely; and in further recognition that safe transportation depends on the driver/employee's physical dexterity, reflex action, unimpaired judgement, and unimpaired senses of sight and hearing; and in recognition of the fact that certain drug and/or alcohol use can impair an employee's ability to transport students safely; the Board of Education hereby implements a controlled substance and alcohol testing program for all employees engaged in safety-sensitive functions.

As part of the Board's continuing effort to provide an environment for students and employees that promotes health and safety, the Board will not tolerate the use, possession, or sale of any controlled substances, alcohol, or misuse of any legally prescribed or obtained medications by employees engaged in safety-sensitive functions. The Board will provide training, education, and other assistance to employees to help them understand their responsibilities in achieving an environment free of alcohol and controlled substances.

Information concerning Drug and Alcohol Testing is outlined in [Procedure P.GCRA](#). Noncompliance with this policy or violation of the regulations may result in severe disciplinary action, including suspension or dismissal.

Employee Background Checks ([Policy GAK](#))

All personnel employed by the Gwinnett County Board of Education (BOE) shall be fingerprinted and have a criminal background check performed, at time of hire or before, as required by state law.

- **Certificated:** Teachers, principals, and other certificated personnel employed on or after January 1, 2011, shall have a criminal background check made upon any certificate renewal application to the Professional Standards Commission.
- **Non-Certificated:** Non-certificated personnel shall also have a criminal background check conducted on a periodic basis, not to exceed every five years, using procedures and schedules as determined by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

Equal Opportunity Employment ([Policy GAAA](#), [Procedure P.GAAA](#))

It is the policy of the Board not to discriminate based on gender, age, color, disability, religion, or national origin in any educational program or other programs, activity, or service or admissions to facilities operated by the Board or in the employment practices of the Board. It is the express policy of the Board to comply with all appropriate laws and regulations relating to discrimination now in effect or hereafter enacted including Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, and all accompanying regulations.

Health and Safety

The Board recognizes the responsibility for ensuring the safety of all employees. Therefore, it is the policy of the Board to take all practical steps to develop and implement a safety program for all employees, which will provide and maintain safe and healthful working conditions, adequate protection equipment, and develop operating procedures and practices that comply with federal, state, and local legislation pertaining to accident prevention.

To help ensure safe working conditions, an employee is responsible for:

- Knowing the potential hazards of the job.
- Learning and following the safety practices required by management.
- Using health and safety devices required by the job (the Gwinnett County Board of Education has adopted a policy regarding Infectious Diseases; all employees are required to be familiar with this policy). Detailed information can be found in Communicable Diseases. ([Policy GANA](#))
- Correcting and/or reporting safety hazards immediately.
- Immediately reporting any accident or injury to a supervisor.
- Obeying "No Smoking" regulations. All students are prohibited from tobacco use on campus or at school activities, functions, or events. While fulfilling their duties as district employees, staff members shall not use tobacco in the presence of students or on school system property. Please refer to the section titled "Personnel Smoking" for additional information. ([Procedure GAMA](#))
- Operating machinery or equipment only if qualified to do so.
- Maintaining good housekeeping practices including keeping all fire exits clear and firefighting equipment accessible.

Identification and Security Badges

All employees of GCPS will have picture identification badges. When an employee terminates, his/her direct supervisor should inform the Employee Clearance Office to ensure any security access is canceled upon termination. Badges for terminated employees should be returned to the Employee Clearance Office, located at the J. Alvin Wilbanks Instructional Support Center.

Lateral Transfers ([Policy GBM](#), [Procedure P.GBN](#))

Certified and classified employees may be displaced from their current school due to a reduction in staff allotment, approved changes in curriculum, or budgetary limitations. Principals will identify any employees "displaced" based on tentative staff allotment. All displacements are subject to review and approval by the Human Resources Director. All displacement forms must be submitted to a Human Resources Director according to the timeline established by the Division of Human Resources.

The following criteria will be observed in effecting these transfers:

- The needs of the instructional program.
- Volunteers will be given top priority.

Personnel Attire ([Policy GBRC](#))

The expectation of the Board is that all staff members dress in a professional manner. Dress should be appropriate for the position.

Personnel Records ([Policy BE](#), [Procedure P.BE](#))

Information contained in an employee's personnel record is kept strictly confidential except as may be required by law, requested by the employee, or requested by authorized officials on a need-to-know basis. Otherwise, requests for information not specifically approved by the employee will be referred to the Open Records Officer (openrecordsofficer@gcpsk12.org). There are specific document types that are protected from public disclosure, as stated in the Georgia Open Records Act. These documents include medical records, home address information, Social Security numbers, insurance information, and confidential evaluations.

GCPS will release, with written approval from the employee, information about the employee's current salary, dates of employment, job title, and work location.

Employees may review their personnel records by contacting the Division of Human Resources to schedule an appointment. Confidential reference documents are not available for review.

Personnel Smoking

No employee, student, nor school visitor is permitted to use any tobacco product while in any building, facility, or vehicle owned or leased by GCPS. This includes all school grounds and property as well as athletic fields and parking lots. Tobacco use is prohibited at all school- or system-sponsored events 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Personnel Time Schedule ([Policy GBRC](#))

A full-time work schedule is 8 hours per day and 40 hours per week. The principal or program manager sets a schedule within this policy for the time of arrival and departure of all employees assigned to his/her operation. In order for an organization to achieve its desired goals, excellent attendance and punctuality are necessary. Therefore, regular and prompt attendance is expected and required of all employees. If it is necessary to be absent or late to work, employees are responsible for contacting their supervisor at least one day in advance, if possible. In case of emergency or other circumstances when it is impossible to give advance notice, employees are responsible for contacting their supervisor or designee before time to report to work.

Personnel Use of Illicit Drugs ([Procedure GAMA](#))

For criminal drug statute convictions of employees for violations occurring in the workplace, the following steps must be followed:

- Employees must notify GCPS in writing of any criminal drug statute arrest and/or conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace (in GCPS facilities, vehicles, and at school-sponsored activities) no later than five calendar days after such conviction.
- GCPS will notify all appropriate federal agencies in writing within 10 calendar days after receiving notice from an employee or otherwise receiving actual notice of such conviction.
- GCPS will take one of the following actions, within 30 calendar days of receiving notice with respect to any employee who is so convicted.
- Take appropriate personnel action against such an employee, up to and including termination, consistent with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and/or
- Require such employee to participate satisfactorily in drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a federal, state, or local health, law enforcement, or other appropriate agency.

An on-going drug-free awareness program is provided to inform employees about:

- The dangers of drug abuse.
- GCPS Drug-Free Workplace [Policy GAMA](#) and the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act for Students and Employees.
- The penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Schools and school districts are mandated by Federal law, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), to protect educational records. "Educational records" refers to those data elements that are (1) directly related to a student; and (2) maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting on behalf of the agency or institution.

FERPA permits school districts to disclose information designated as "Directory Information" without consent of parent or student. Directory information is considered information which is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. It includes student information found in athletic and extracurricular programs, yearbooks, honor roll, and other recognition lists, graduation programs, etc.

Extra care must be taken to protect "non-directory" student information as well as personally identifiable information contained within student records, either in electronic or paper form. Among the items considered non-directory information are:

- Advisement records
- Courses taken
- Disciplinary actions
- Grades
- Schedule
- Student number
- Test scores

Personally identifiable information in education records is defined as a student's first and last name with one or more of the following data elements:

- A list of personal characteristics that would make the student's identity easily traceable.
- Any other information or identifiers that would make the student's identity easily traceable.
- Name of student's parent(s) or other family member(s).
- Social security number.

Reduction in Force ([Policy GBN](#), [Procedure P.GBNAA](#), [Procedure P.GBN](#))

A reduction in force may occur for the following reasons: inadequate funds; loss of funding that includes the reduction or expiration of grant generated funds; insufficient student enrollment to merit continuation of a program or service; decline in average daily attendance; decline in need for services rendered by a position classification; return of contractual personnel from extended leave; discontinuation of a program by action of the Board; change in class sizes; closure or change in purpose of a school or program; reorganization; legislative mandates; judicial decrees; other exigencies. The determination of employees to be demoted or terminated is based upon approved procedures established by the Board and school system administration.

Teachers, administrators, or other employees having a contract for a definite term are afforded certain procedural rights as provided for in the Georgia Fair Dismissal Law, OCGA 20-2-940 et.seq. Employees not under contract are considered "at-will."

Responsibility to Report Criminal Charges ([Policy GAM](#), [Procedure P.GAM](#), [Procedure P.GBU](#))

Any employee of the Gwinnett County Board of Education who is arrested, charged, indicted, bound over by or to a grand jury, convicted, enters a plea or is nolle prosequed for or to any crime or criminal offense in the State of Georgia or elsewhere, whether the crime or criminal offense is a felony or misdemeanor, shall report each and all of these events, occasions, or developments to employee's principal/supervisor within 48 hours after the arrest or legal action, or immediately upon the employee's return to work, whichever comes first. The principal/supervisor shall immediately notify the Division of Human Resources.

In making the report, the employee shall:

- Provide a copy of the arrest warrant, citation, motor vehicle accident report, indictment, or any other narrative explanation of the arrest generated by the arresting officer/jurisdiction.
- Disclose all court dates and the disposition of the matter within **48 hours** after that information becomes available to the employee.

Sexual Harassment Policy (*[Policy GAEB](#)*)

The Board is committed to providing a workplace free from distractions caused by sexual harassment; all forms of discrimination based on age, gender, race, color, religion, national origin, or disability; or inappropriate or offensive conduct. It is the Board's expectation that all personnel conduct themselves in a highly professional manner and respect co-workers, students, parents, and customers. In this regard, the Board prohibits sexual harassment, all forms of discrimination, and other unprofessional conduct.

Sexual harassment includes repeated unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which:

- Is made a term or condition of an individual's employment.
- Is used as the basis for employment decisions such as promotions or benefits; and/or
- Substantially interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Examples of sexual harassment and unprofessional conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Making sexually oriented remarks such as jokes, inquiries, or innuendoes.
- Making inappropriate sex-based comments, gestures, or insults and sex-based stereotyping.
- Making inappropriate comments or compliments about physical appearance or attire.
- Making inappropriate sexual terms of endearment or demanding forms of address.
- Offering employment or other benefits in exchange for sexual favor.
- Making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances.
- Asking a co-worker repeatedly to spend time with you after being turned down.
- Displaying offensive sexual material in the workplace.
- Touching, pinching, grabbing, patting, kissing, or hugging unnecessarily or inappropriately.
- Having inappropriate discussions of personal sexual activities; and/or
- Sending inappropriate sexually explicit photos, poems, stories, jokes by electronic media or courier or any other internal means of communication.

Filing a Complaint of Sexual Harassment (*[Procedure P.GAEB](#)*)

A person should report complaints of sexual harassment to the Local School/Division Title IX Coordinator or employee's supervisor or any manager. If for any reason, the person prefers not to share the complaint with a direct supervisor, employee's may file a complaint with the Executive Director of Employee Relations in the Division of Human Resources. The complaint may be in writing or made in person.

Staff Conflict of Interest (*[Policy GAG](#)*)

All employees shall avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict with their professional responsibilities. The Board provides the policy written below with the full knowledge that the good judgment of each employee is essential, and that no list of rules or guidelines can provide direction for all circumstances that arise. Employees who have questions about a potential conflict of interest must discuss the situation with the immediate supervisor and/or the Division of Human Resources.

No two relatives of the immediate family may be employed in the same school or unit when one of the two serves in an immediate supervisory capacity.

- | | |
|------------|-------------------|
| • Husband | • Son |
| • Wife | • Mother-in-Law |
| • Mother | • Father-in-Law |
| • Father | • Sister-in-Law |
| • Brother | • Brother-in-Law |
| • Sister | • Daughter-in-Law |
| • Daughter | • Son-in-Law |

For purposes of this policy, the principal, assistant principal(s), and community school director of a school are deemed to be direct supervisors of all employees assigned to the school. The practice of assigning married couples or other persons within the immediate family to the same school is strongly discouraged and should be avoided whenever possible. Persons who are common-law married or who are living together in a cohabitated relationship are also subject to this policy. The principal, in collaboration with the Human Resource Director, will submit a recommendation and plan when a married couple or other persons within the immediate family are assigned to the same school. If subsequent to adoption of this policy, employees become related in a form otherwise prohibited by this policy that is disruptive or otherwise detrimental to the effective and efficient operations, the district may elect to resolve such issue by transferring individuals to other locations.

Dual Pay

Employees shall be prohibited from receiving dual-pay for services rendered during the regular working hours. The employee must forfeit the regular pay or the pay from another agency, organization, or individual. Employees may receive payment for services rendered while on non-medical leave or for services performed other than during the regular working day.

Endorsements

GCPS employees carry the responsibility of being a representative of the district. Employees should be aware that decisions and actions that could be interpreted as written or oral endorsements of a product or service should be considered in the light of whether the action may be interpreted as a conflict of interest.

No employee of the Gwinnett County Board of Education shall give a written or oral endorsement to any company or representative for promotional purposes for any periodical, book, or product that may be offered for sale to schools, parents, or pupils in employee's charge. Actions that could be construed as a conflict of interest or a violation of the Code of Ethics for Educators may jeopardize the staff member's employment relationship with GCPS.

Non-School Employment

GCPS employees are reminded that their job assignments within the district are their first obligation, and if outside employment is taking time or energy from this position or affecting their performance, they will be asked to choose one or the other.

Each principal/supervisor has direct responsibility for evaluating the effects of outside employment on personnel assigned. Employees seeking employment in any private business or outside activity during the term of their contract shall first receive permission from their respective principal/supervisor before entering into such supplementary employment.

Political Involvement

The Board recognizes that employees have the same civic responsibilities and privileges as any other citizen including the privilege of campaigning for and holding public office and actively supporting candidates and causes in the political arena. The Board also recognizes that the district is entrusted by the citizens of the county and the state of Georgia with a vitally important public mission and that an employee's political activities must not interfere or conflict with an employee's job or with the best interest of the district.

An employee who participates actively in political activity cannot be promoted, demoted, transferred, or terminated solely because of employee's political participation as long as such actions follow the guidelines stated in this policy.

Tutoring

Teachers may not offer private instruction on a fee basis to any student who is presently enrolled in their classes. It is incumbent upon professional staff members to assist students in their classes after school and whenever feasible.

It is preferred that a tutor is a person who is not on the staff of the school in which a student is enrolled. Tutoring must be done in such a way as not to interfere with the orderly routine of the teacher's regular day and school responsibilities.

Staff Meetings ([Policy GBRC](#))

Regular staff meetings are a necessary part of the district operations. Each school shall have a schedule for staff meetings on a regular basis. The principal shall call special staff meetings for professional learning, accreditation, and/or workshops as deemed necessary. All staff members are required as part of their teaching/employment responsibilities to attend any or all such meetings as designated by the principal.

Transfers to New Schools ([Procedure P.GBCA](#))

This procedure is designed to establish guidelines for making routine staffing decisions; however, it must be construed in light of the Board's ultimate responsibility to control and manage the school system. Consequently, notwithstanding any other provision of this procedure, the Board expressly reserves its right and responsibility to place within the limits of its discretion employees at any school within the system to the extent the Board deems it necessary for the orderly and effective management of the school system.

Eligibility:

- Teachers and assistant principals who will have completed three consecutive full and contractual years in their current schools by the end of the current school year—or were involuntarily transferred to their current schools - may request a transfer. (Involuntary transfers would include teachers and assistant principals who were involuntarily moved as a result of redistricting, opening a new school, or reduction in staffing allocation).
- Teachers and assistant principals hired after the first workday of the current year are not eligible to participate in the transfer process.
- Teachers and assistant principals who are currently on Professional Development Plans (PDPs) or received an overall Ineffective, Needs Development, or Unsatisfactory evaluation are not eligible to participate in the transfer process.
- Regular education or special education teachers with less than three years in their current schools may apply for a transfer to positions in moderate/severe/profound intellectual disabilities, self-contained autistic, and self-contained EBD. **This exception does not apply to teachers requesting transfers within these fields.**
- Teachers and assistant principals administratively placed must complete three consecutive full and contractual years before being eligible for a voluntary transfer.
- A teacher offered a head coaching position at another school may also apply for a transfer to the school where the head coaching assignment is located. The three-year rule does not apply for head coaching positions. A teacher may accept a coaching assignment at another school. However, a teacher may not transfer to said school outside of the transfer process.

Transfer Procedures and Timelines

Transfer requests for the next school year will be accepted during the placement preference time frame established by the Division of Human Resources. The transfer process is for lateral transfers only (i.e., assistant principal-to-assistant principal or teacher-to-teacher). Teachers and assistant principals who want to request a lateral transfer to a different location for the next school year must complete the approved Placement Preference Process Form.

The following procedures will be followed:

- Eligible teachers and assistant principals who desire a transfer to a new location must submit the Placement Preference Form prior to the announced deadline.
- Teachers and assistant principals who have requested a transfer will be considered for any vacancy for which they are qualified, up to the announced deadline.
- It is the responsibility of the principal at the requested school to respond to the teacher or assistant principal applying for the transfer.

Cybersecurity Incident Reporting

Gwinnett County Public Schools has established an information security program to provide the resources to mitigate the threat of cybercrime. Cybercriminals increasingly target K-12 school districts due to the volume of sensitive information we collect about our students and staff and our reliance on technology resources that streamline school district operations.

Every GCPS employee has a role in safeguarding our information and technology resources. We must remain vigilant and proactive in our approach to cybersecurity. This section describes the fundamental actions you can take to provide our students and staff with a secure digital learning and work environment.

A cybersecurity incident is any event that compromises the confidentiality, integrity, or availability of our information and technology resources. Such incidents can have serious consequences, including data breach, financial losses, and damage to the school district's reputation. Understanding what constitutes a cybersecurity incident is important to provide our students and staff with a secure digital learning and work environment.

Examples of cybersecurity incidents include:

- Non-compliance with GCPS' Responsible Use of Electronic Media policies. ([Policy IFBG](#))
- Malware infections, such as viruses, ransomware, spyware or worms on any device or network within our district.
- Phishing attacks, which are fraudulent emails or websites that attempt to deceive employees into purchasing gift cards or providing sensitive information, such as login credentials.
- Any instance where someone gains access to our systems, networks, or data without proper authorization.
- Loss or theft of a GCPS-issued laptop, mobile device, or other information storage device.

If you experience or suspect a cybersecurity incident report it immediately to your Technology Support Technician, Instructional Technology and Innovation Coach, or the Technology and Innovation Customer Support Center at 678-301-6547. You can also forward suspected phishing emails to the Office of Information Security by clicking the "Report Phish" button in Microsoft Outlook.

Cybersecurity Annual Awareness Training

All employees must complete the annual cybersecurity awareness training. This training is designed to give each staff member the knowledge and skills to recognize and respond appropriately to cyberattacks that target them. Topics covered include identifying phishing emails, creating strong passwords, and best practices for data protection. Completion of this training is mandatory and is monitored for compliance. Notifications about the training schedule will be sent during pre-planning.

Multifactor Authentication Service Enrollment

Multi-factor authentication, or MFA, adds an extra layer of security to your Employee Portal login, ensuring only you can access your account even if someone knows your password. As we fulfill our roles and responsibilities, we often have access to sensitive information about our students, families, and colleagues. By enrolling in MFA, you contribute to our shared commitment to safeguard this information and uphold the trust of our stakeholders. Enrollment in the MFA service is mandatory and should be completed during employee onboarding.

To complete your enrollment:

- Sign on to the Employee Portal.
- Navigate to your name (hint: top right corner of the navigation bar).
- From the drop-down menu, click "Edit MFA Information."
- Follow the directions on the screen.

Responsible use of Technology and Electronic Media for Staff

Gwinnett County Public Schools recognizes that the use of technology has a significant role in teaching and learning and the operation of the school system. Students and staff have access to the Internet and a variety of technology tools, applications, and devices, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology to learn, interact, share, create and innovate. Staff members utilize these same resources to effectively engage, motivate, and direct student learning and collaborate with colleagues.

When using GCPS devices, accounts, technology, and/or network either at a GCPS facility or off-site, staff are expected to follow guidance, laws, and practices aligned with [Board Policy IFBG](#) and associated procedures, [Georgia Code of Ethics](#), the GCPS Employee Handbook, and the GCPS Guidance for Human-Centered AI Use. GCPS credentialed accounts should be used for legitimate educational or operational purposes and will be subject to monitoring and review, including review of text and attachments. At NO TIME should staff consider GCPS email, networked applications, or account or technology access private or confidential in any way. Staff should follow professional communication expectations and be cautious when sharing private or confidential information via email, chats, or other communication tools.

All staff should be models to students by treating these learning tools with respect and responsibility. GCPS devices, accounts, technology, and network must not be used to:

- Harm other people.
- Interfere with other people's work.
- Steal property.
- Gain unauthorized access to other people's files or programs.
- Gain unauthorized access to online resources, including obtaining or using someone else's password.
- Make changes to the hardware or software configuration of any machine, unless authorized.
- Improperly use the network, including introducing software viruses and/or bypassing local school or office security policies.
- Steal, alter, or damage data and/or computers and network equipment.
- Access, upload, download, and/or distribute pornographic, hate-oriented, profane, obscene, or sexually explicit material.
- Misrepresent or plagiarize work.
- Share data and/or information in ways that violate laws and policy.

Children's Online Privacy Protection Act ([COPPA](#))

COPPA applies to operators of commercial websites and online services and limits their ability to collect personal information from children under the age of 13. COPPA allows the school to act as the parent's agent and consent to the collection of a student's information on the parent's behalf within the educational context— where an operator collects personal information from students for the use and benefit of the school, and for no other commercial purpose. By signing the response form, parents grant consent for Gwinnett County Public Schools, and Gwinnett County Public Schools' employees, to act as the parent's agent in providing consent for the collection of student information within the educational context.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ([FERPA](#))

Teachers should be aware of Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ([FERPA](#)) and applicable state laws, along with GCPS policies regarding the use of educational products and services from educational technology vendors and the use of student data. Information that is tied to individual students is referred to as directory information and non-directory information. Directory information includes information about a student that is generally not considered an invasion of privacy if disclosed, such as name, age, address, and grade level. Non-directory information is educational records that are more sensitive than directory information, such as social security number, student ID, grades, disciplinary history, and attendance record.

Personally identifiable information, or PII, can be either directory information or non-directory information. PII is information that, alone or in combination, is linked or linkable to a specific student that would allow a person, who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to identify the student with reasonable certainty. Under FERPA, you cannot share non-directory, PII information without parental consent.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools

Artificial intelligence refers to computer systems that are trained with data to automate tasks normally requiring human intelligence. AI is used across industries and communities. To ensure staff are equipped for current and future work, staff should learn to evaluate if and how they should use AI and develop responsible and ethical practices when using AI tools. Staff are responsible for modeling and providing expectations related to responsible and ethical use of AI tools. Staff members should follow the most recent version of GCPS Human-Centered Guidance for AI.

- **AI Output Review:** Always review and critically assess outputs from AI tools before submission or dissemination. Staff and students should never rely solely on AI-generated content without review.
- **Bias and Misinformation:** Be aware that AI-generated content may possess biases or inaccuracies. Always verify AI-produced results using trusted sources before using or acting on output.
- **Safety & Respect:** Users must not use AI tools to create or propagate harmful, misleading, or inappropriate content.
- **Transparency:** Guidance should be provided to students on if or how AI can be used in student work. Any use of AI to aid assignments, projects, or research must be declared and cited by students and staff.
- **Usage:** AI tools will be used for educational purposes or staff productivity only. Misuse or malicious use of AI technologies will lead to disciplinary action.
- **Personal Information:** Staff and students should never input personal, sensitive, or confidential data into any AI system without prior authorization, including any data related to student education records.

Failure to follow these guidelines can violate O.C.G.A. § 16-9-90, § 16-9-91, § 16-9-93, and § 16-9-93.1 as well as Title XVII of The United States Public Law 106-554, known as the [Children's Internet Protection Act \(CIPA\)](#). Such use can also lead to disciplinary actions.

Lost or Stolen Computing Equipment

The loss or theft of GCPS-issued IT resources, such as laptops and mobile devices, poses a significant cybersecurity risk to the school district. If an IT resource is lost, stolen, or destroyed, report it immediately to your principal, assistant principal, direct supervisor, or division leadership. You must also file a police report with the Office of School Safety and Security or your local police department.

Staff Members' Social Media Use ([Procedure P.IFBG](#), [Procedure P.IFBH](#))

As online technologies become more interactive, GCPS is providing new methods for supporting teaching and learning, including social media, home access to learning activities, and enhanced online resources. Social media includes all types of communication shared in an electronic format, including Facebook, X, YouTube, blogs, wikis, e-mail, social networks, instant messaging, video-hosting sites, and emerging technology that encourages sharing and electronic collaboration. Each vehicle has its own style and privacy options. These technologies must meet GCPS standards and expectations for communication with students, parents, staff, and community members. Information regarding FERPA and the school district's media release expectations are detailed in the [Handbook Information for Students and Families](#).

Some additional guidelines around social networking are important to remember:

- Treat school-related social media as a secondary form of communication with parents and students. District-approved or district-hosted communication tools (such as e-mail and the school website) are the primary resources for communicating with parents and students about school-related matters.
- Communicate with students and parents about school-related matters through district-approved or district-hosted electronic accounts and applications, such as district e-mail and the school or department website.
- Do not share information, pictures, or work examples of GCPS students unless parents have approved such use of their child's information, images, and work examples on social network sites.
- Do not share information, pictures, or work examples of GCPS staff members on social network sites without their approval.

- Consider the information being distributed and its impact on your credibility as a staff member and your ability to perform your duties.
- Only allow “true friends” access to your personal information, and carefully consider what you post about your professional activities and environment on personal social networking sites.
- Directly connect the use of social networking to the academic purpose of the classroom when maintaining a site for teaching and learning purposes.
- Remember that staff members are expected to follow the ethical and professional standards for educators and associated procedures. If you choose to post information about your work, strive to post only information that is a positive reflection of your efforts to educate students and interact with others.

15 Useful Social Media Tips:

- Do not share confidential information.
- Obey applicable laws and the Code of Ethics for Educators.
- Respect GCPS time and property. You should participate in personal social media conversations on your own time.
- Use your best judgment. What you write may have serious consequences. Once you post something on social media, you can’t “get it back.” Even deleting the post doesn’t mean it’s truly gone. Ultimately, you bear sole responsibility for what you post.
- Replace error with fact. When you see misrepresentations made about your school or district in social media, you may certainly identify and correct the error. Always do so with respect and with the facts.
- Be aware of the image you present. Any time you engage in social media, you’re representing yourself and GCPS. Don’t do anything that discredits you or your service as a professional educator or employee.
- Be cautious with information sharing. Maintain privacy settings on your social media account, change your passwords regularly, and don’t give out personally identifiable information. Be cautious about the personal details you share on the Internet.
- Avoid the offensive. Don’t post any defamatory, libelous, vulgar, obscene, abusive, profane, threatening, racially or ethnically hateful, or otherwise offensive or illegal information or material.
- Don’t violate privacy. Don’t post any information that would infringe upon the proprietary, privacy, or personal rights of others.
- Don’t violate copyright. Don’t post information or other material protected by copyright without permission of the copyright owner.
- Don’t misuse trademarks.
- Make no endorsements. Don’t use your school or the district’s name to endorse or promote products, political positions, or religious ideologies.
- Do not misrepresent yourself. Don’t disguise, impersonate, or otherwise misrepresent your identity or affiliation with any other person or entity.
- Don’t promote yourself for personal or financial gain. Don’t use your school system affiliation to promote, endorse, or benefit yourself or any profit-making group or agency.
- Follow terms of service. Be familiar with a social media site’s terms of service and follow them. For example, having two personal profiles on Facebook violates its terms of service.

These tips include information from several resources, including GCPS [Procedure P.JFBG](#), “Voices of the Staff” from the University of Michigan, and “The Air Force Social Media Guide”.

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

Effective January 1, 2024

Introduction

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

Definitions

- a) **"Breach of contract"** occurs when an educator fails to honor a signed contract for employment with a school/school system by resigning in a manner that does not meet the guidelines established by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. (GaPSC)
- b) **"Certificate"** refers to any teaching, service, or leadership certificate, license, or permit issued by authority of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. (GaPSC)
- c) **"Child endangerment"** occurs when an educator disregards a substantial and/or unjustifiable risk of bodily harm to the student.
- d) **"Complaint"** is any written and signed statement from a local board, the state board, or one or more individual residents of this state filed with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission alleging that an educator has breached one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators. A "complaint" will be deemed a request to investigate.
- e) **"Educator"** is a teacher, school or school system administrator, or other education personnel who holds a certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission and persons who have applied for but have not yet received a certificate. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, "educator" also refers to paraprofessionals, aides, and substitute teachers.
- f) **"Inappropriate"** is conduct or communication not suitable for an educator to have with a student. It goes beyond the bounds of an educator-student relationship.
- g) **"Physical abuse"** is physical interaction resulting in a reported or visible bruise or injury to the student.
- h) **"Student"** is any individual enrolled in the state's public or private schools from preschool through grade 12 or any individual under the age of 18. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, the enrollment period for a graduating student ends on August 31 of the school year of graduation.

Standards

- a) **Standard 1: Legal Compliance** - An educator shall abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the commission or conviction of a felony or of any crime involving moral turpitude; of any other criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, trafficking, sale, or possession of a controlled substance or marijuana as provided for in Chapter 13 of Title 16; or of any other sexual offense as provided for in Code Section 16-6-1 through 16-6-17, 16-6-20, 16-6-22.2, or 16-12-100; or any other laws applicable to the profession. As used herein, conviction includes a finding or verdict of guilty, or a plea of *nolo contendere*, regardless of whether an appeal of the conviction has been sought; a situation where first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt pursuant to the charge was granted; and a situation where an adjudication of guilt or sentence was otherwise withheld or not entered on the charge or the charge was otherwise disposed of in a similar manner in any jurisdiction.
- b) **Standard 2: Conduct with Students**- An educator shall always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
 - i. Committing any act of child abuse, including physical and verbal abuse;
 - ii. Committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment;
 - iii. Committing any sexual act with a student or soliciting such from a student;

- iv. Engaging in or permitting harassment of or misconduct toward a student;
 - v. Soliciting, encouraging, or consummating an inappropriate written, verbal, electronic, or physical relationship with a student;
 - vi. Furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student; or
 - vii. Failing to prevent the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs by students under the educator's supervision (including but not limited to at the educator's residence or any other private setting).
- c) Standard 3: Alcohol or Drugs** - An educator shall refrain from the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs during the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
- i. Being on school or Local Unit of Administration (LUA)/school district premises or at a school or a LUA/school district-related activity while under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs; and
 - ii. Being on school or a LUA/school district premises at a school-related activity involving students while under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcohol. A school-related activity includes, but is not limited to, any activity sponsored by the school or school system (booster clubs, parent-teacher organizations, or any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum i.e. Foreign Language trips, etc.).
 - (i) For the purposes of this standard, an educator shall be considered "under the influence" if the educator exhibits one or more of the following indicators, including but not limited to: slurred speech, enlarged pupils, bloodshot eyes, general personality changes, lack of physical coordination, poor motor skills, memory problems, concentration problems, etc.
- d) Standard 4: Honesty** - An educator shall exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to falsifying, misrepresenting, or omitting:
- i. Professional qualifications, criminal history, college, or staff development credit and/or degrees, academic award, and employment history;
 - ii. Information submitted to federal, state, local school districts and other governmental agencies;
 - iii. Information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel;
 - iv. Reasons for absences or leaves;
 - v. Information submitted in the course of an official inquiry/investigation; and
 - vi. Information submitted in the course of professional practice.
- e) Standard 5: Public Funds and Property** - An educator entrusted with public funds and property shall honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
- i. Misusing public or school-related funds;
 - ii. Failing to account for funds collected from students or parents;
 - iii. Submitting fraudulent requests or documentation for reimbursement of expenses or for pay (including fraudulent or purchased degrees, documents, or coursework);
 - iv. Co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts; and
 - v. Using school or school district property without the approval of the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee.
- f) Standard 6: Remunerative Conduct** - An educator shall maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
- i. Soliciting students or parents of students or school or LUA/school district personnel, to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially

benefit the educator unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee;

- ii. Accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest;
- iii. Tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee; and
- iv. Coaching, instructing, promoting athletic camps, summer leagues, etc. that involves students in an educator's school system and from whom the educator receives remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee. These types of activities must be in compliance with all rules and regulations of the Georgia High School Association.

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

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

h) Standard 8: Required Reports - An educator shall file with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission reports of a breach of one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators, child abuse (O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5), or any other required report. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

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

i) Standard 9: Professional Conduct - An educator shall demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and preserves the dignity and integrity of the education profession. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to a resignation that would equate to a breach of contract; any conduct that impairs and/or diminishes the certificate holder's ability to function professionally in his or her employment position, or behavior or conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students; or failure to supervise a student(s).

j) Standard 10: Testing - An educator shall administer state-mandated assessments fairly and ethically. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

- i. Committing any act that breaches Test Security; and
- ii. Compromising the integrity of the assessment.

Reporting

- a) Educators are required to report a breach of one or more of the Standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. Educators should be aware of legal requirements and local policies and procedures for reporting unethical conduct. Complaints filed with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission must be in writing and must be signed by the complainant (parent, educator, or other LUA/school district employee, etc.).
- b) The GaPSC notifies local and state officials of all disciplinary actions. In addition, suspensions and revocations are reported to national officials, including the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEd) Clearinghouse.

Disciplinary Action

- a) The Georgia Professional Standards Commission is authorized to suspend, revoke, or deny certificates, to issue a reprimand or warning, or to monitor the educator's conduct and performance after an investigation is held and notice and opportunity for a hearing are provided to the certificate holder. Any of the following grounds shall be considered cause for disciplinary action against the educator:
 - i. Unethical conduct as outlined in The Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);
 - ii. Disciplinary action against a certificate on grounds consistent with those specified in the Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);
 - iii. Order from a court of competent jurisdiction or a request from the Department of Human Services that the certificate should be suspended or the application for certification should be denied for non-payment of child support (O.C.G.A. § 19-6-28.1 and §19-11-9.3);
 - iv. Suspension or revocation of any professional license or certificate;
 - v. Violation of any other laws and rules applicable to the profession (O.C.G.A. § 16-13-111); and
 - vi. Any other good and sufficient cause that renders an educator unfit for employment as an educator.
- b) An individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended may not serve as a volunteer or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher, or in any other position during the period of his or her revocation, suspension or denial for a violation of The Code of Ethics for Educators. The Superintendent and the educator designated by the Superintendent/Local Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that an individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district. Both the Superintendent and the Superintendent's designee must hold GaPSC certification. Should the Superintendent's certificate be revoked, suspended, or denied, the Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that the Superintendent whose certificate has been revoked, suspended, or denied is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district.
- c) The GaPSC is authorized to determine no probable cause as provided in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-984.4(e) and § 20-2-984.5(e) if:
 - i. After a preliminary investigation is concluded it is unlikely that there exists a preponderance of the evidence necessary to prove at a hearing that a violation occurred; or
 - ii. After a hearing the administrative law judge makes a determination that there is not a preponderance of the evidence necessary to prove that a violation occurred.
- d) The Georgia Professional Standards Commission is authorized to determine no further action is necessary pursuant to C.G.A. § 20-2-984.5(a) if after review of the report of the preliminary investigation, sanctions should not be imposed.

Sanctions

- a) As outlined in O.C.G.A. 20-2-984.5(c), the GaPSC has the discretion to issue a probable cause sanction against and educator. Common violations and associated sanctions can be found in the accompanying [GaPSC Guidance](#).
 - i. Denial is the refusal to grant initial certification to an applicant for a certificate;
 - ii. Monitoring is the quarterly appraisal of the educator's conduct by the GaPSC through contact with the educator and his or her employer. As a condition of monitoring, an educator may be required to submit periodic criminal background check (GCIC). The GaPSC specifies the length of the monitoring period;
 - iii. Reprimand admonishes the certificate holder for his or her conduct. The reprimand cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action;
 - iv. Revocation is the permanent invalidation of any certificate held by the educator. A Voluntary Surrender is equivalent to and has the same effect as a revocation. A Voluntary Surrender shall be accepted and becomes effective upon receipt by the GaPSC;
 - v. Suspension is the temporary invalidation of any certificate for a period of time specified by the GaPSC; and
 - vi. Warning informs the certificate holder that his or her conduct is unethical. The warning cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.

Application Procedures

- a) "Yes" answers to Personal Affirmation Questions (PAQs) require submission of information identified in the accompanying [GaPSC Guidance](#).
- b) With respect to an initial applicant, an application and corresponding ethics case that is initiated pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-984.3(c) will automatically close and be placed on hold if the applicant fails to submit requested documentation to the Ethics Division within 45 days of the request to the applicant. The application will be placed on hold in anticipation of the submission of a new application and the applicant's responding to any requests for documentation in a timely fashion.
 - i. Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT IN GEORGIA SCHOOLS

Standardized testing has become a basic component of accountability for students, teachers, administrators, schools, and school systems in Georgia and other states. Communities rely on their schools' standardized test scores to determine the success of their schools and to compare them to other communities. Test scores also have a major impact on the economic future of communities. New industries use test scores as a major factor in selecting locations for new facilities. As a result of national and state accountability ratings, standardized testing has become important to all states as well as within Gwinnett County Public Schools. When tests are properly administered, scored, and interpreted with a high degree of professionalism, all stakeholders can be guided to make reliable and appropriate decisions. A good testing program provides the following benefits:

- Students, based on their individual test scores, will know the skills and knowledge they have mastered and how they compare to other students.
- Parents can evaluate whether their children are obtaining the skills and knowledge they need to be successful during and after their school experiences.
- Teachers can determine if students have mastered the skills and knowledge needed to advance to the next level and if not what skills and knowledge need improvement.
- Community members can compare local student performance with performances of students in other locations. The community has a measuring stick to determine if schools are making improvements from year to year.

Georgia relies on state-mandated assessments as a key component of the state accountability program as well as using the test results to fulfill federal requirements for educational accountability. Gwinnett County Public Schools relies on effective implementation of the components of our Balanced Assessment System, which include district developed assessments such as interim assessments, final exams, and Gwinnett Writes, to evaluate student progress and mastery of the Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS). For reliable and valid reporting, tests must be administered fairly and ethically. In the pursuit of fair and ethical testing for all stakeholders, the following areas shall be addressed before, during, and after testing.

- **Test Security** – Test materials should be secured before, during, and after testing and scoring to ensure fair assessment of all students.
- **Test Preparation** – The test should reflect the Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS), which include the state-adopted content standards being taught and should be developmentally appropriate for the age and level of the test-taker. Students should be familiar with test-preparation skills. Educators should be trained in proper administration procedures and testing practices. Tests should be administered in the appropriate environment.
- **Test Administration** – Policies and procedures should be developed to implement fair and ethical testing procedures and practices. All eligible students should be assessed. Tests are used for their intended purposes.
- **Test Data** – Test scoring should be reliable and valid. Test data interpretation shall be appropriately given to stakeholders. Curriculum and instructional improvements should be guided by adequate data analyses.

Georgia Student Assessment Program Responsibilities

The successful implementation of the state and district student assessment program requires a concerted effort by many individuals at the local level. General responsibilities are described below. More detailed responsibilities are listed on the following pages.

NOTE: The failure of any personnel to assume the responsibilities described herein may result in testing irregularities and/or invalidation of scores. Additionally, failure to assume responsibilities may affect professional certification status.

Superintendent

Communication Requirements

1. Has ultimate responsibility for all testing activities within the local school system.
2. Designates the System Test Coordinator (STC) and notifies the GaDOE through the Primary Role Management application in the MyGaDOE Portal of any new appointments to this role as they may occur due to changes in personnel or updates to primary or back-up STC positions.
3. Supervises Principals and System Test Coordinator (STC) to ensure that they fulfill their specific responsibilities for the administration of tests.

4. Maintains contact with System Test Coordinator (STC) to become thoroughly informed of all testing activities.
5. Ensures that local calendars are planned so that all tests are administered according to the state-published testing calendar.
6. Informs local board members, parents, and other citizens about requirements pertaining to statewide testing.
7. Informs stakeholders residing within the local system's area concerning the collective achievement of enrolled students by school and system.

Test Security Requirements

8. Ensures that Principal's Certification Forms are completed after each test administration and retained as required.
9. Approves all special administration and flexibility requests.
10. Completes the Superintendent's Certification form in the MyGaDOE Portal due January 31 each year for assessments conducted August 1-December 31 as well as July 31 each year for assessments conducted January 1-July 31 each year.

Training Requirements

11. Ensures that appropriate local personnel attend GaDOE trainings concerning state assessment programs.

Test Environment Requirements

12. Ensures that the appropriate personnel complete all necessary readiness checks for online testing.
13. Ensures that personnel enforce prescribed calculator, cell phone, and electronic device guidelines.

Monitoring of Assessments Requirements

14. Conducts investigations of reported testing irregularities (e.g., student cheating, unethical professional conduct). Reports unethical professional conduct to the Educator Ethics Division of the GaPSC.
15. Monitors testing activities in the local school system to guarantee compliance with regulations established by the State Board of Education (SBOE) and current legislation.

System Test Coordinator (STC)

Communications Requirements

1. Must be designated by the Superintendent.
 2. Serves as liaison between the system and the GaDOE for all test administration activities.
 3. Acquires and maintains current information on the statewide testing program, including the section for Students with Disabilities and special populations.
 4. Coordinates all test administration activities within the school system including collaboration with the Technology Director and/or technical staff, Special Education Director, ESOL/Title III Coordinator, and /or designated staff, Principals and SchTCs.
 5. Accounts for participation of all students in terms of testing requirements, including special populations and those requiring testing accommodations.
 6. Coordinates with System Technology Director or Coordinator for the appropriate implementation of technology-based test administrations including scheduling, training, system and device requirements and other communications.
 7. Ensures that local calendars are planned so that all tests are administered according to the state published testing calendar that provides testing dates for the current and future academic years.
 8. Furnishes all information and submits all forms required by the GaDOE by specified dates.
 9. Ensures that students, parents, and other stakeholders have access to information concerning all test administrations and utilization of test.
 10. Works with system personnel to communicate to parents of students with IEPs, IAPs, and ELL/TPC plans pertinent information regarding all statewide tests.
 11. Communicates any special accommodation requests to the Assessment Administration Division at least six (6) weeks prior to the administration of a state-mandated assessment.
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12. Ensures all with security roles related to assessments remain current and/or receive current GaDOE information throughout the school year to ensure compliance with successful test administrations.

Test Security Requirements

13. Ensures and validates with collaboration from SchTC that all Test Examiners are Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) certified and hold, at a minimum, a valid and current clearance certificate.
14. The STC is expected to be familiar with guidance and information found in the Student Assessment Handbook. In addition, the STC is expected to review all communication through emails, Assessment Updates, and guidance posted to the Testing/Assessment website testing.gadoe.org including links to the For Educators webpage and testing program sites.
15. Assumes responsibility for carrying out the approved district assessment plan for administration of all tests.
16. Receives test materials from GaDOE at a designated time and place and maintains them in a secure location, and accounts for all test materials delivered to the school system and for the disposition of specific materials.
17. Develops a district-wide protocol for storing, inventorying, distributing, and maintaining all secure test materials according to GaDOE guidelines and protocols for all test administrations and determining a protocol for the local school collection of all inventories, sign-in/sign-out sheets, and documentation collected related to secure test material. This collection may be maintained at the school or district-level.
18. Responsible for the collection of all student enrollment counts and orders of special format tests (Braille, large print) and reporting to assessment vendors and/or GaDOE, as required according to timelines provided in GaDOE training sessions and communications.
19. Ensures the appropriate security provisions and technology readiness checks are in place/completed relative to online testing environments including, but not limited to, security of logins, test tickets, passcodes, seating arrangements, etc.
20. Adheres to test dates, time schedules, and specified instructions set by the GaDOE and returns all materials to GaDOE and/or its contractors as specified and by the prescribed date(s).
21. Oversees the destruction of materials per guidance found in Test Administration Manuals.
22. Ensures principals complete the Principal Certification Form for each administration and maintains these forms for five years.
23. Provides information for the Superintendent's Test Certification twice a year to allow for submission by the Superintendent by January 31 for assessments administered between August 1 and December 31; and by July 31 for assessments administered between January 1 and July 30 each year.

Training Requirement

24. Completes all GaDOE required assessment and test security training as published in the Student Assessment Handbook and posted in the Assessment Update.
25. Ensures and verifies with attendance reported and completion certifications that all SchTCs have participated and completed all GaDOE required assessment and test security training as published in the Student Assessment Handbook and posted in the Assessment Updates.
26. Trains all SchTCs in test security protocols and assessment administration policies and procedures and ensures examiners, proctors, the system Special Education Coordinator (on the administration of the GAA 2.0), the system ESOL Coordinator (on the administration of ACCESS for ELLs/Alternate ACCESS), and any others who have responsibilities related to testing and/or testing materials receive training by appropriate personnel prior to all assessment administrations.
27. Ensures that all SchTCs or other designated personnel have been trained to assign appropriate accommodations for students accurately in the online platform prior to administration of assessments, and that any corrections made to accommodations include the printing of a new test ticket where require. This requires establishing a protocol for monitoring and review of the assignment of appropriate accommodations for students at the district and/or school level.
28. Coordinates all training plans related to test administration activities (online and paper), ethical behavior of personnel, and test security for personnel and students.

29. Ensures that principals and SchTCs are aware of and follow the protocols/procedures prescribed in the Student Assessment Handbook, testing manuals, and other ancillary materials.
30. Maintains a roster of attendance by personnel for all GaDOE mandatory training sessions, local training sessions, and associated materials, purposes and is prepared to produce these documents if requested.

Testing Environment Requirements

31. Reviews and follows all procedures in all administration manuals and is familiar with administrators' roles and proctors' roles.
32. Ensures that each test setting (room) is suitable, has an assigned trained examiner, and has the appropriate number of trained proctors.
33. Ensures that prescribed calculator, cell phone, and electronic device guidelines are applied in each school.
34. Distributes test results to the Superintendent and to the schools in a timely manner and ensures that students are informed of the expected date for the return of the test results.
35. Interprets test results to school personnel and appropriate others.

Monitoring Testing Irregularities Requirements

36. Ensures strict test security and reports to Superintendent concerning testing irregularities (e.g., student cheating, unethical professional conduct).
37. Communicates to the GaDOE Office of Assessment and Accountability in a timely manner when testing irregularities occur.
38. Arranges schedule for staff to monitor schools during testing sessions.
39. Answers questions of all SchTCs and Principals and makes decisions regarding testing, when appropriate.
40. Ensures that SchTCs account for all students in terms of testing participation requirements.
41. Monitors each test administration for school or system-level errors and data corrections that may result in the local system being invoiced for additional costs.

System Technology Coordinator

1. Acquires and maintains current information on statewide testing program, including technology requirements for testing programs, training manuals, and testing schedules.
2. Coordinates with the System Test Coordinator for the appropriate implementation of computer-based test administrations.
3. Completes all GaDOE required assessment training as published in the Student Assessment Handbook and posted in the Assessment Update **[state assessments only]**.
4. Works with the System Test Coordinator to ensure that all schools have technology ready for online testing.
5. Performs readiness checks for the system and local testing devices.
6. Coordinates with schools so local software is installed and ready for use with each testing administration.
7. Coordinates with schools so that test content is available on servers and student responses can properly send to the testing vendor.
8. Verifies that district network security including firewalls and content filters are configured to work with the testing vendors to allow for test content and student responses to pass through the district network.
9. Verifies that wired and wireless bandwidth is appropriate for testing as defined in the system requirements documentation and training sessions.
10. Monitors district resources during test administrations for quality assurance.
11. Troubleshoots technology issues as they arise prior to and during test administrations.
12. Completes all post-testing tasks as stated in technology manuals, handbooks, and guides.

System Special Education Coordinator **Communication Requirements**

1. Acquires and maintains current information on the statewide testing program, including the section for Students with Disabilities, which is found in the Assessing Special Populations section of the Student Assessment Handbook and the Accessibility & Accommodations Manual.
2. Acquires and maintains current information of IDEA, state rules, and waiver process for students with disabilities.
3. Accounts for participation of all students in terms of testing requirements, including special populations and those requiring testing accommodations.
4. Ensures all with security roles related to assessments remain current and/or receive current information throughout the school year as provided by the System Testing Coordinator, School Testing Coordinator, and/or GaDOE to ensure compliance with successful test administrations.

Test Security Requirements

5. Ensures that IEP teams understand the appropriate selection of approved accommodations for all state and district-mandated assessments.
6. Collaborates with the STC, SchTC, and/or Special Education Lead to ensure accommodations have been coded properly in online testing platforms to ensure accommodations for all eligible students are available and identified on test tickets, where applicable, during every testing session.
7. Ensures that IEP teams understand the appropriate selection and eligibility criteria for students who require the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA 2.0).
8. Acquires and maintains current information about the alternate assessments (e.g., GAA 2.0 and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs).
9. Informs the STC of any special accommodation requests at a minimum of eight weeks prior to the administration of a state mandated assessment.
10. Informs the STC of the number of students who must receive each accommodation allowed by state regulations.

Training Requirements

11. Completes all GaDOE required assessment and test security training as published in the Student Assessment Handbook and posted in the Assessment Update.
12. Provides technical assistance to special education teachers on test administration.
13. Ensures that all due process rights pertaining to the testing programs are provided for students with disabilities.
14. Ensures that appropriate documentation is maintained for all students with disabilities.
15. Ensures that the following activities are completed by special education personnel in preparation for all state-mandated assessments:
 - a. Discusses the state required tests with the students and parents/guardians.
 - b. Informs IEP students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) of pertinent test information and the role of the IEP team in identifying test accommodations, if any, which the student may require to participate.
 - c. Discusses with the student and parents/guardians the consequences of the student not passing a state - mandated assessment (such as promotion/retention requirements, EOCs constituting percentage of the final course grade per SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.13 Statewide Passing Score, and any relevant local policies). Documents the occurrence of this discussion.
16. Ensures that all designated special education teachers have been trained to administer the GAA 2.0.
17. Collaborates with Title III/ESOL colleagues to train designated special education and/or ESOL teachers to administer the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs.

Testing Environment Requirements

18. Ensures that students with disabilities have the appropriate test-taking experience or have been taught test-taking skills prior to taking the tests.

19. Informs STC of the number of special format tests (i.e., Braille, state-approved assistive technology, or large print) needed to test students with disabilities for all test administrations.
20. Coordinates with the System Technology Coordinator for the successful implementation of technology-based assessments including technology-related requirements for students with disabilities, scheduling, training, system requirements, and other communications.

Monitoring of Testing Irregularities Requirements

21. Collaborates with the STC, SchTC, and/or Special Education Lead to ensure accommodations have been coded properly in online testing platforms to ensure accommodations for all eligible students are available and identified on test tickets, where applicable, during every testing session.

System ESOL Coordinator

Communication Requirements

1. Acquires and maintains current information on the statewide testing program (SB Rule 160-3-1-.07), including the section on accommodations for English learners (EL) found in the Accommodations section of the SAH.
2. Accounts for participation of all EL students in terms of testing requirements, including those requiring testing accommodations.
3. Ensures all staff/personnel with security roles related to assessments remain current and/or receive current information throughout the school year as provided by the STC, SchTC, and/or GaDOE to ensure compliance with successful test administrations.
4. Ensures that all assessments and, in certain cases, conferences relating to a student's ESOL eligibility (Rule 160-4-5-.02) are documented prior to assigning EL, EL-1, or EL-2 status.
5. Ensures EL1 and EL2 students are not administered the ACCESS for ELLs. By definition, EL=1 and EL=2 students have exited EL=Y status and must not be administered the ACCESS for ELLs or the Alternate ACCESS assessments.
6. Ensures that appropriate documentation is maintained for all EL, EL=1 and EL=2 students.
7. Ensures that the following activities are completed by EL/ESOL personnel in preparation for all state-mandated assessments:
 - a. Discusses the state-required tests with the students and parents/guardians.
 - b. Informs EL, EL=1, or EL=2 students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) of pertinent test information and the role of the EL/TPC in identifying test accommodations, if any, which the student may require to participate.
 - c. Discuss with the student and parents/guardians the consequences of the student not passing a state-mandated assessment (such as promotion/retention requirements, EOCs constituting for a percentage of the final course grade per SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.13 Statewide Passing Score, and any relevant local policies). Documents the occurrence of this discussion.

Test Security Requirements

8. Verifies all test examiners have completed annual certification and training requirements with WIDA for administering ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs as well as appropriate test security and test administration procedures.
9. Informs the STC of the number of students who must receive each accommodation allowed by state regulations.

Training Requirements

10. Completes all GaDOE required assessment and test security training as published in the Student Assessment Handbook and posted in the Assessment Update.
11. Train teachers to administer ACCESS for ELLs and collaborates with special education colleagues to train the appropriate teachers to administer the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs.
12. Provides technical assistance to teachers on test administration.

Testing Environment Requirements

13. Ensures that EL students have appropriate test-taking experience or have been taught test-taking skills prior to taking the tests.

Principal

Communication Requirements

1. Designates a SchTC to coordinate the testing program. The SchTC must hold a GaPSC-issued certificate.
2. Has ultimate responsibility for testing activities in the local school.
3. Informs students and parents/guardians about the purpose of testing, dates and times for testing, and expected dates for return of test results.
4. Creates an atmosphere in which all staff members know that their cooperation is needed and expected for successful test administration.
5. Arranges appropriate schedules for teachers who will be Proctors and Examiners and for those who will be teaching other students not involved in testing.
6. Adheres to system testing calendar.

Test Security Requirements

7. Ensures that the school calendar is planned so that all tests are administered according to the system's testing calendar.
8. Monitors test preparation activities to ensure that secure testing materials are not misused.
9. Monitors the administration of tests.
10. Supervises all testing activities to ensure strict test security.
11. Reviews and returns the Principal's Certification Form to the STC after each administration.

Training Requirements

12. Ensures and verifies with attendance reports and verified certifications that all Test Examiners and Proctors have participated and completed all GaDOE required assessment and test security training as published in the Student Assessment Handbook and posted in the Assessment Updates.
13. Verifies all examiners have been trained in test security, educator ethics, and test administration protocols and policies to administer the state-mandated assessments.
14. Assigns GaPSC certified personnel to serve as Examiners and ensures that all Examiners and Proctors receive appropriate training in test security, management of secure test materials, and administration protocols for all assessments.
15. Ensures that only personnel who have received test security, appropriate management of secure test materials training, and who are GaPSC certified, handle such materials.

Testing Environment Requirements

16. Ensures that all testing sites are appropriately prepared: updated devices and technology resources, adequate student workspace, proper lighting, good ventilation, sufficient number of desks in good repair, instructional materials (e.g., posters, word walls, etc.) removed or covered, etc.
17. Ensures that the appropriate personnel complete all necessary readiness checks for online testing.
18. Ensures that personnel apply prescribed calculator, cell phone, and electronic device guidelines to each test setting and each testing administration.
19. Ensures proper online and/or paper testing environments for all test administrations.
20. Ensures that the test accommodations identified in students' IEPs, IAPs, and EL/TPC plans are provided for each student as specified prior to the administration of all testing sessions.
21. Ensures that testing sites are free of interruptions during test administration (e.g., intercom messages, visitors, wandering students, entry into test settings by person/persons not serving as the examiner or proctor unless necessitated by emergency/time-sensitive need), and those sites do not have content-related materials posted that could advantage one group of students over others.

Monitoring Testing Irregularities Requirements

22. Advises SchTC, Examiners, and Proctors if emergency situations arise.

23. Ensures all materials are stored in a secure, locked location with restricted access, confirms access is restricted by accounting for keys, and accounts for the security of all test materials during the time the materials are in the building.
24. Works in collaboration with the SchTC to notify the STC of testing irregularities and provides explanation of circumstances.

School Test Coordinator (SchTC)

Communication Requirements

1. Ensures all with security roles related to assessments remain current and/or receive current information throughout the school year as provided by the STC, and/or GaDOE to ensure compliance with successful test administrations.
2. Coordinates with various local school and/or system divisions to ensure successful test administrations (Special Education, Technology, Title III, etc.).
3. Accounts for participation of all students in terms of testing requirements, including special populations and those requiring testing accommodations.

Requirements in Test Security

4. Must be GaPSC certified and adheres to the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators and must hold a clearance certificate as defined by the GaPSC.
5. Verifies all test examiners have completed annual certification and training requirements with WIDA for administering WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS as well as appropriate test security and test administration procedures.
6. Assist Principal in assigning Examiner(s).
7. Adheres to system testing calendar.
8. Verifies all Test Examiners are Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) certified and hold, at a minimum, a valid and current clearance certificate.
9. Ensures that only personnel who have received test security and appropriate management of secure test materials training, and who are GaPSC certified, handle such materials.
10. Receives and inventories all secure and non-secure test materials from STC following district protocol for receipt and inventory of secure and non-secure test materials.
11. Ensures that appropriate security provisions are in place relative to online testing environments and materials including, but not limited to, security of logins, passcodes, conducive seating arrangements, etc.
12. Ensures that students have only one opportunity to test during each window.
13. Ensures that a minimum of one certified administrator or the SchTC is present and witnesses the transcription of student responses when/where necessary. Scribed responses must follow GaDOE guidance and include a Validation Form for Transcription of Answer Documents. Documentation of this process must be retained and confirms that all necessary transcriptions are completed.
14. Ensures all materials are stored in a secure, locked location with restricted access, confirms access is restricted by accounting for keys, and accounts for the security of all test materials during the time the materials are in the building.
15. Maintains an inventory and protocol for daily distribution of secure student rosters and test tickets according to GaDOE guidelines and protocols as well as established local system protocols regarding storage, inventory, distribution, and receipt of secure test materials for all test administrations. It is required that all secure test materials be returned to the secure, locked location with restricted access at the end of each test session and prior to the end of the school day. A copy of all inventories, sign-in/sign-out sheets, and documentation collected related to secure test material must be maintained locally.
16. If applicable, determines the number of paper test booklets and answer documents to be assigned to each testing site and accounts for material distribution and return. Under supervision, ensures the accuracy of student GTID numbers on each answer document.
17. Packages and returns materials to STC according to directions and timeline found in Test Administration Manuals.

Training Requirements

18. Completes all GaDOE required assessment and test security training as published in the Student Assessment Handbook and posted in the Assessment Update.
19. Ensures and verifies that all Test Examiners and Proctors have participated and completed all GaDOE required assessment and test security training as published in the Student Assessment Handbook and posted in the Assessment Updates.
20. Trains school-based personnel in test security protocols and assessment administration policies and procedures and ensures examiners, proctors, the special education teachers, ESOL teachers, and any other who have responsibilities related to testing and/or testing materials receive training (including any make-up training sessions) prior to all assessment administration.
21. Ensures that all SchTCs or other designated personnel have been trained to assign appropriate accommodations for students accurately in the online platform prior to administration of assessments, and that any corrections made to accommodations include the printing of a new test ticket where required. This requires establishing a protocol for monitoring and review of the assignment of appropriate accommodations for students in the district and/or school level.
22. Conducts orientation and training sessions related to test administration, test security, and ethical behavior for all personnel expected to be in direct contact with the test administration process including Examiners and Proctors.
23. Assigns trained Proctors appropriately in accordance with state guidelines.
24. Maintains local records of all training sessions for all assessments including agenda, sign in sheets, handouts, and presentations.

Testing Environments Requirements

25. Prepares all testing locations and ensures availability and readiness of student devices school network and bandwidth preparedness in collaboration with technology coordinators.
26. Provides each Examiner with a roster of students identified by GTID in each test session to include a list of accommodations, if applicable. In addition, each Examiner must be provided test tickets for each student identified on the roster for the designated content area/course, grade level and test section for each day of testing.
27. Accounts for participation of all students in terms of testing requirements, including special populations and those requiring testing accommodations.
28. Ensures that the test accommodations identified in students' IEPs, IAPs, and EL/TPC plans are coded in all online platforms, test tickets, and student rosters provided for each student as specified prior to the administration of all testing sessions.
29. Gives Examiners extra No. 2 pencils, online test tickets, computer peripherals, and resource materials, if appropriate.
30. Ensures that personnel apply prescribed calculator, cell phone, and electronic device guidelines to each test setting.
31. Ensures that testing sites are free of interruptions during test administration (e.g., intercom messages, visitors, wandering students, entry into test settings by person/persons not serving as the examiner or proctor unless necessitated by an emergency/time-sensitive need) and those sites do not have content-related materials posted that could advantage one group of students over others.
32. Ensures any paper-based test administrations follow all protocols for validating that student demographic/identification information is accurate, that necessary coding/labeling is complete, and that all student responses have been entered according to the Test Administration Manual and/or Test Examiner guidance. SchTC and/or STC must have a protocol in place to ensure the examiner review has been completed, is accurate and all necessary coding/labeling is complete.
33. Ensures that for any students not currently enrolled in the school where the assessment is being administered, that the following protocol is applied:
 - a. contacts students' enrolled school for verification of test eligibility and receives test ticket from enrolled school for the student;
 - b. ensures the student test using the test ticket where the students reported as enrolled (a test ticket should not be issued in the school where the assessment is being administered);

- c. ensures that student identity has been verified to assure the student taking the test matches the information on the test ticket before administering the assessment; and,
- d. recognizes that student score reports are assigned to the home (FTE) school of the student.

Monitoring Testing Irregularities Requirements

34. Notifies Principal and STC of any emergency and helps to decide what action needs to be taken.
35. Notifies and provides an explanation of circumstances of any testing irregularities to the Principal and STC. The STC will report testing irregularities to the GaDOE through the MyGaDOE Portal with any and all supporting documentation.

Examiner

Communication Requirements

1. Communicates with the SchTC and/or Special Education Lead Teacher and/or ESOL Coordinator regarding student accessibility and accommodations related to IEP/IAP and/or EL/TPC plans and ensures student rosters and related test tickets are accurate prior to all test administrations.
2. Accounts for participation of all students in terms of testing requirements, including special populations and those requiring testing accommodations.

Test Security Requirements

3. Must be GaPSC certified and adheres to the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators. As required by State Board Rule 160-3-1-.07, certified educators (teachers, interpreters, counselors, administrators, and paraprofessionals) must administer all state-mandated assessments. The term Certified Educator in this statement is defined as those educators directly involved with the instruction of students, and who must hold a clearance certificate as defined by the GaPSC. Educators without Georgia certification from the GaPSC must not administer state assessments. Local systems must be mindful of certificate expiration dates and ensure that all examiners possess a valid/unexpired certificate at the time of test administration. The term Examiner refers to the person administering the assessment.
4. Reviews and follows all procedures in handling all secure and non-secure administration materials.
5. Documents the daily receipt (date, time, and number received) of all secure and non-secure test materials and the daily return of all secure and non-secure test materials.
6. Ensures the security of test booklets while they are in the testing site before, during, and after testing. At no time, should any secure test materials be left unattended.
7. Applies and enforces prescribe calculator, cell phone, and electronic device guidelines.

Training Requirements

8. Completes all GaDOE required assessment and test security training as published in the Student Assessment Handbook and posted in the Assessment Update.
9. Has completed annual certification and training requirements with WIDA for administering WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS as well as appropriate test security and test administration procedures.
10. Participates and completes all local training related to test administration, test security, and ethical behavior.
11. Sign Language interpreters may review the test before administering the assessments to their students. However, it is unethical for interpreters to reproduce or disclose any secure material or to cause it to be reproduced or disclosed in any form. Video sign language is the preferred mode for online assessments, where available.

Testing Environment Requirements

12. Ensures all test materials, Test Examiner Manuals test tickets, and student rosters are inventoried and correct prior to administering any test sessions.
13. Prior to the administration of any and all testing sessions, ensures that no content related instructional material are displayed in the testing site. Charts, diagrams, and posters should not be visible. Chalkboards/Whiteboards should be free of any writing except for test procedure information.
14. Prior to the administration of any and all testing sessions, ensures that the test accommodations identified in students' IEPs, IAPs and EL/TPC plans are provided for each student as specified.

15. Validates that all students have received the correct test ticket to include:
 - a. Validation of correct name and GTID number.
 - b. Validation of any assigned accommodations.
 - c. Validations that students have signed their test ticket.
 - d. Validation that students have returned all test tickets following completion of the test session.
16. Follows procedures for testing as given in the Examiner's Manual, including reading all directions word-for-word to students.
17. Provides No. 2 pencils, erasers, pens for writing tests, and resource materials (if appropriate).
18. Returns all test materials to SchTCs immediately after testing each day, including special format tests, such as Braille or large print.
19. Ensures any paper-based test administrations follow all protocols for ensuring that student demographic/identification information is accurate, that necessary coding/labeling is complete, and that all student responses have been entered according to the Test Administration Manual and/or Test Examiner guidance. Scribed responses must follow guidance and include a Validation Form for Transcription of Answer Documents. SchTC and/or STC must have a protocol in place to ensure the examiner review has been completed, is accurate and all necessary coding/labeling is complete.

Monitoring Testing Irregularities Requirements

20. Maintains control of testing situation and keeps students on task. Examiners must actively circulate and monitor students throughout the testing session(s).
21. Monitors for unauthorized use of cell phones, electronics devices (except in the case of students with a documented medical need), cheat sheets, notes, notebooks, formula sheets, writers' checklists, multiplication tables, etc. and follows procedures for reporting such incidents.
22. Allows no student to leave the test room unless there is an emergency/health/restroom need.
23. Monitors test administrations and communicates with the SchTC and/or the Technology Coordinator or designee when test administration, technology, and/or student issues arise.
24. Notifies the SchTC immediately of an incorrect test ticket or incorrect student roster information prior to starting any test session.
25. Provides a statement for any incident deemed a testing irregularity to the SchTC and follows local protocols for reporting significant testing irregularities to the STC and GaDOE.

Proctor

Communication Requirements

1. Communicates with the SchTC and/or Special Education Lead Teacher and/or ESOL Coordinator regarding student accessibility and accommodations related to IEP/IAP and/or EL/TPC plans and ensures student rosters and related test tickets are accurate prior to all test administrations.

Test Security Requirements

2. Assumes responsibility for assigned students.
3. Assists the examiner in applying and enforcing prescribed calculator, cell phone, and electronic device guidelines.
4. With examiner supervision, assists in accounting for all classroom test materials (Test materials must be returned to the SchTC by the Examiner).
5. Assist the Examiner in maintaining strict test security.

Training Requirements

6. Completes all GaDOE required assessment and test security training as published in the Students Assessment Handbook and posted in the Assessment Update.
7. Participates and completes all local training related to test administration, test security, and ethical behavior.

Testing Environment Requirements

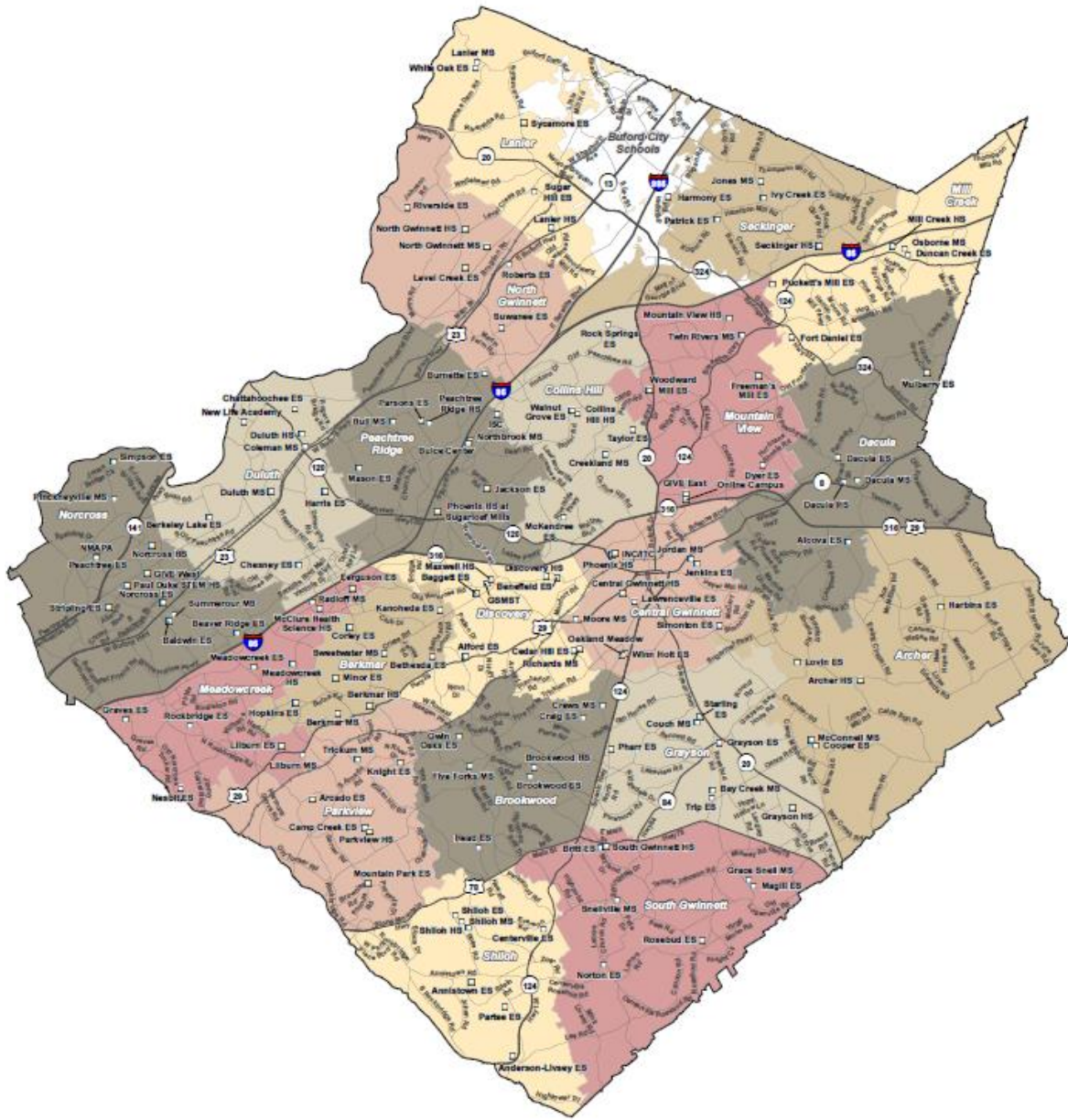
8. Monitors a specific area if a large testing site is used.
9. Monitors online test administrations and communicates with Examiner when test administration, technology, and/or student issues arise.
10. With examiner supervision, assists in preparing test materials for distribution to students in a classroom on days of testing.
11. Ensures that desks are clear of everything except test materials.
12. With Examiner supervision, assists in distributing and collecting classroom test materials.
13. With Examiner supervision, answers questions regarding test procedures but does not explain items or answer any questions regarding the content of the test.
14. Remains in testing site during entire testing time.
15. Observes students during testing to monitor that they are actively engaged in the assessment.
16. Avoids standing by a student's desk too long or touching a student, as this may be distracting.

Monitoring Testing Irregularities Requirements

17. Ensures students are using only specified test materials and/or not engaging in online sites outside of the testing environment. Reports observations of student actions to Examiner and/or SchTC immediately.
18. Reports any unusual circumstances to Examiner immediately (e.g., suspicion of cheating).
19. Circulates among students during testing to discourage misconduct and to be available to answer student questions.
20. Monitors students with disabilities, 504 students, or EL students who may require closer observation than other students or who need special assistance.

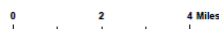
GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS - LOCATION MAP


**Gwinnett County Public Schools -
Location Map: School Year 2024 - 2025**



Legend

- Schools
- Major Roads
- Collector Streets
- Railroads
- High School Cluster Boundary (*Differentiated with solid colors)
- Gwinnett County Boundary





Planning Department
678-301-7085
June 2024

EMPLOYEE RESOURCES

- [Board Approved Policies](#)
- [Certification](#)
- [Employee Benefits](#)
- [Employee Perks](#)
- [Employee Portal](#)
- [GCPS Foundation](#)
- [GCPS Jobs.org](#)
- [GCPS News](#)
- [GCPS Publications](#)
- [Georgia Department of Community Health](#)
- [Georgia Department of Education](#)
- [Georgia Professional Standards Commission \(GaPSC\)](#)
- [Gwinnett Effectiveness Initiative](#)
- [Gwinnett Retirement Services](#)
- [Leadership Development](#)
- [Leave of Absence](#)
- [Notices for Employees \(Posters\)](#)
- [Phone Directory](#)
- [Public School Employees Retirement System of Georgia \(PSERS\)](#)
- [Retirement Savings Plans](#)
- [Safety & Security](#)
- [Salary Schedules](#)
- [Teachers Retirement System \(TRS\)](#)
- [United States Department of Labor](#)
- [Work Calendars](#)



Gwinnett County Public Schools

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<https://www.gcpsk12.org>

It is the policy of Gwinnett County Public Schools not to discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, color, religion, disability, or national origin in any employment practice, educational program, any other program, activity, or service.

The officers, employees and officials identified in this handbook are charged with using their personal judgment and deliberation in executing the functions and tasks set forth herein and nothing in the handbook should be construed or interpreted to create any ministerial duties on behalf of any officer, employee or official.

GWINNETT
COUNTY
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS