

Polk County Public Schools

Gail F. McKinzie, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK & BENEFITS INFORMATION

2007-2009

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Polk County Public Schools is to ensure rigorous, relevant learning experiences that result in high achievement for our students.

The information provided in the Employee Handbook and Benefits Information is intended to advise employees of Polk County Public Schools of the various policies, procedures, benefits, and services available to them. This Handbook is neither an employment contract, nor a guarantee of any rights, benefits, or entitlement to the same.

Revised: 01/07

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Section 1 Opening

Superintendent's Welcome
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Discrimination Policy Statement
Workplace Harassment of Employees
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Drug Free Workplace
Additional District References
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Welcome to Polk County Public Schools

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the public school system in Polk County. As you may already know, we are among the nation's 40 largest school districts and serve a rapidly growing student population. We believe that we are successful every day that we can offer our students the fullest opportunities to learn and experience. This includes everything from appropriate and rigorous curriculum, to clean and sanitary facilities, to timely and efficient transportation.

We value every member of our team for the vital roles they play in this process and recognize that a collective effort is essential to our success. As you adjust to your new responsibilities, you will soon come to experience from those around you, the team attitude, and hard work that motivate us toward better educational opportunities for our students. It is my hope that your efforts as a member of this team will effectively and efficiently contribute to the mission.

As a new employee, you will undoubtedly wish to become acquainted with the policies, procedures, and benefits that contribute to our success, much of which is contained within this manual. Please read through it, and again I wish you a warm welcome to the Polk County public school system.

Sincerely,

Gail F. McKinzie, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Polk County Public Schools

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF POLK COUNTY

Frank O'Reilly
District 1
863-534-0529
frank.oreilly@polk-fl.net

Lori Cunningham
District 2
863-678-0552
lori.cunningham@polk-fl.net

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863-533-7714
hazel.sellers@polk-fl.net

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863-324-0127
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863-802-5483
kay.fields@polk-fl.net

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District 6
863-294-9076
margaret.lofton@polk-fl.net

Tim Harris
District 7
863-808-0005
tim.harris@polk-fl.net

School Board Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 1:30 PM and on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 5:00 PM, subject to change, in the Polk County School Board Auditorium, 1915 South Floral Ave., Bartow, FL 33830. Meetings are held year-round, and these scheduled meetings are open to the public.

**POLK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
STRATEGIC PLAN
2005-2008**

Mission Statement

The mission of Polk County Public Schools is to ensure rigorous, relevant, learning experiences that result in high achievement for our students.

We believe that...

- Any learning changes a person forever.
- The strength of the community depends on the strength of the family.
- Each person is responsible for his/her own actions.
- Every person has an absolute value as a unique human being.
- The family has the responsibility for the upbringing of its children.
- Every person deserves respect.
- Respect for individual differences creates harmonious relationships.
- There is universal right and wrong.
- All people have a right to be safe.
- Internal motivation removes limits.
- People are always learning.
- We are stewards of all that is entrusted to us.
- The character of a community is defined by how it treats its most vulnerable members.

Parameters

We will never compromise quality.

We will not allow competition among the components of our system without mutual benefit.

We will not engage in any activity that detracts from our K-12 instructional program.

We will hold the highest expectations of everyone.

We will make optimal use of technology throughout the district.

Goal 1: Clear School/District Mission: We will create a professional culture of articulation to accomplish our mission.

- 1. Create a highly professional culture that will foster a tradition of pride and respect.**
 - a. Utilize the district mission statement to create a common theme to be used by all shareholders.
 - b. Communicate to employees that their individual contributions add to the entire district's success or failure.
- 2. Maintain a keen awareness of how traditions, customs, events, and calendars are impacted by the broad diversity of changing community.**
 - a. Promote awareness of multi-cultural events and calendars.

Goal 2: Opportunity to Learn: We will ensure students realize their highest potential.

- 1. Detect and eliminate any systemic barriers to minority, challenged and/or economically disadvantaged students reaching their academic and personal goals.**
 - b. Assess each school to determine systemic barriers for minority, challenged, and/or economically disadvantaged students.

- c. Develop and implement individual school's Plan of Action to be included in the School Improvement Plan to eliminate systemic barriers for all students.
 - d. Develop and implement a Transition Plan to successfully progress students between elementary, middle, and high school.
- 2. Increase student use of effective interpersonal and decision-making skills.**
 - a. Implement an effective curriculum/program/plan for social skills, problem solving, conflict resolution, character education, and goal setting for students in all grade levels.
 - 3. Provide opportunity and support for all students to reach their full academic potential.**
 - a. Develop a rigorous and relevant curriculum that will challenge students at all academic levels.
 - b. Provide training in successful differentiated instructional strategies to support student learning.
 - c. Implement differentiated instructional strategies in the classroom.
 - 4. Increase student participation and success in career and technical education.**
 - a. Assess and inform students regarding career and educational opportunities.
 - b. Assist students in planning and preparing for career/educational goals.
 - 5. Implement a balanced reading program at every grade level in every school.**
 - a. Provide training and facilitate incorporation of the K-12 Reading Program.
 - b. Provide appropriate assessment, placement, and reading instruction for students.
 - 6. Enhance the effectiveness of Alternative Education.**
 - a. Identify and secure funding to provide salaries and incentives to attract and retain highly qualified staff, to encourage new approaches and to evaluate programs in meeting the needs of students.
 - 7. Implement a bell/transportation schedule for schools that is consistent with optimum student performance research concerning daily beginning and ending times for students.**
 - a. Develop, implement, and evaluate a research-based bell/transportation schedule for optimum student performance.

Goal 3: High Expectations: We will ensure that our instruction and curriculum meet the educational needs of each student.

- 1. Drive the teaching/learning process based on the goals, objectives, strategies, and evaluations in the School Improvement Plans.**
 - a. Develop and approve School Improvement Plans according to DOE template and guidelines.
 - b. Use School Improvement Plans to drive teaching/learning.
- 2. Align curriculum that reflects the knowledge and skills students are expected to master at each level, K through 12, based on Sunshine State Standards.**
 - a. Review, revise and align a rigorous and relevant curriculum based upon Sunshine State Standards.
 - b. Monitor and evaluate curriculum based on disaggregated student data.
- 3. Establish a formalized inter- and intra-school process for articulation.**
 - a. Schedule and conduct formalized inter- and intra-school meetings and discussions.

Goal 4: Monitoring of Student Progress: We will improve student achievement.

- 1. Increase student proficiency levels to meet state standards.**
 - a. Implement K-12 Reading Program.
 - b. Implement Board approved School Improvement Plans.
 - c. Implement revised K-12 curriculum.
 - d. Implement revised bell/transportation schedule.
 - e. Implement comprehensive professional development plan.
- 2. Eliminate the achievement gap among all subgroups.**
 - a. Implement revised rigorous and relevant curriculum.
 - b. Implement Board approved School Improvement Plans.
 - c. Monitor and evaluate student performance using disaggregated student data.
- 3. Conduct on-going progress monitoring of student achievement.**
 - a. Conduct training on progress monitoring assessments, administration and interpretation.
 - b. Conduct on-going student assessments.
- 4. Provide timely interventions to struggling students.**
 - a. Identify struggling students and provide immediate interventions.

Goal 5: Instructional Leadership: We will recruit and retain highly qualified personnel by providing a professional work environment that is challenging, nurturing and conducive to professional growth.

- 1. Provide professional instructional leadership while maintaining a vision, direction and focus for student learning.**
 - a. Select strong, highly professional instructional leaders as school based administrators, assess leadership skills, and provide training, support, and mentoring.
 - b. Cultivate a professional collegial atmosphere that encourages creative approaches to meet the needs of students and teachers.
- 2. Develop a district-wide culture committed to attracting, hiring and retaining highly qualified, appropriately certified instructional and administrative personnel that reflects the changing demographics of our diverse community.**
 - a. Develop a comprehensive system of recruitment and retention of highly qualified, diverse, instructional and administrative personnel that includes competitive compensation.
- 3. Provide a coordinated system of relevant, timely staff development for all employee groups consistent with the Florida Professional Development Evaluation Protocol.**
 - a. Assess professional development needs based on student achievement.
 - b. Implement a comprehensive plan of staff development.
- 4. Ensure an effective teacher induction program.**
 - a. Review and revise new teacher induction program according to researched best practices to increase its effectiveness.
- 5. Establish a competitive compensation structure for district employee groups.**
 - a. Develop a comprehensive compensation system for recruitment and retention of highly qualified district personnel.
- 6. Incorporate diversity benchmarks into the performance evaluation process for teachers and administrators.**
 - a. Review and revise the current performance evaluation process for teachers and administrators to include diversity benchmarks.

7. **Recognize those who initiate and implement innovative activities that make a difference in learning diversity, multicultural education, and the unique contributions of minority history.**
 - a. Develop policy and procedures for recognition of activities that make a difference in learning diversity, multicultural education, and the unique contributions of minority history.
8. **Implement leadership team strategies that are designed to comprehensively impact academic performance, discipline sanctions and technology standards of low performing schools.**
 - a. Develop and implement leadership team strategies.

Goal 6: Safe and Orderly Environment: We will establish learning environments that ensure the academic and personal success of each student.

1. **Create a design for elementary, middle, and high schools, and standards relating to each school type that are consistent with educational research concerning student learning processes.**
 - a. Research and review effective campus designs to reflect effective instructional practices, incorporate the findings into existing campuses, and utilize best-practices and equitable consideration in construction of new campuses.
2. **Cultivate a highly professional environment that is safe, orderly and family friendly.**
 - a. Require all employees to wear ID badges.
 - b. Front office staff will greet school visitors in a timely manner, and parent concerns will be resolved at the point of origin.

Goal 7: Stakeholder Relationships: We will actively pursue and cultivate parent, community and business involvement.

1. **Establish an effective system of communication linking district, school and home.**
 - a. Establish mechanisms at the district and school level to communicate with parents, staff and community on a regular basis.
2. **Expand the system's community outreach function to promote school and community interaction.**
 - a. Provide information and collaborate with the community on student and school needs (e.g. parent workshops).
 - b. Establish communication with local post-secondary institutions.
 - c. Collaborate with the community on Pre-K student needs and school readiness.
3. **Promote initiatives and encourage inclusive practices that increase multicultural cooperation within the schools and community.**
 - a. Provide information and collaborate with the community on minority, challenged and/or economically disadvantaged students, and school needs.

EDUCATION STANDARDS COMMISSION

The Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in Florida and the Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida

Chapter 6B-1 Florida State Board of Education Academic Rules Adopted: June 15, 1982

Amended: November 24, 1998

6B-1.01 Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in Florida

1. The educator values the worth and dignity of every person, the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, acquisition of knowledge, and the nurture of democratic citizenship. Essential to the achievement of these standards is the freedom to learn and to teach the guarantee of equal opportunity for all.
2. The educator's primary professional concern will always be for the student and for the development of the student's potential. The educator will therefore strive for professional growth and will seek to exercise the best professional judgment and integrity.
3. Aware of the importance of maintaining the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents and of other members of the community, the educator strives to achieve and sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct.

6B-1.06 Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida

1. The following disciplinary rule shall constitute the Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida.
2. Violation of any of these principles shall subject the individual to revocation or suspension of the individual teacher's certificate or the other penalties as provided by law.
3. Obligation to student requires that the individual:
 - a. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning and/or to the student's mental and/or physical health and/or safety.
 - b. Shall not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning.
 - c. Shall not unreasonably deny a student access to diverse points of view.
 - d. Shall not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program.
 - e. Shall not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
 - f. Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights.
 - g. Shall not harass or discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition, sexual orientation, or social and family background and shall make reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination.
 - h. Shall not exploit a professional relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage.
 - i. Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional services, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.
4. Obligation to the public requires that the individual:
 - a. Shall take reasonable precautions to distinguish between personal views and those of any educational institution or organization with which the individual is affiliated.
 - b. Shall not intentionally distort or misrepresent facts concerning an educational matter in direct or indirect public expression.
 - c. Shall not use institutional privileges for personal gain or advantage.
 - d. Shall accept no gratuity, gift, or favor that might influence professional judgment.
 - e. Shall offer no gratuity, gift, or favor to obtain special advantages.
5. Obligation to the profession of education requires that the individual:
 - a. Shall maintain honesty in all professional designs.

- b. Shall not on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition if otherwise qualified, or social and family background deny to a colleague professional benefits or advantages or participation in any professional organization.
- c. Shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political or civil rights and responsibilities.
- d. Shall not engage in harassment or discriminatory conduct which unreasonably interferes with an individual's performance of professional or work responsibilities or with the orderly processes of education or which creates a hostile, intimidating, abusive, offensive, or oppressive environment; and further, shall make reasonable effort to assure that each individual is protected from such harassment or discrimination.
- e. Shall not intentionally make false or malicious statements about a colleague.
- f. Shall not use coercive means or promise special treatment to influence professional judgment of colleagues.
- g. Shall not misrepresent one's own professional qualifications.
- h. Shall not submit fraudulent information on any document in connection with professional activities.
- i. Shall not make any fraudulent statement or fail to disclose a material fact in one's own or another's application for a professional position.
- j. Shall not withhold information regarding a position from an applicant or misrepresent an assignment or conditions of employment.
- k. Shall provide upon request of the certificated individual a written statement of specific reason for recommendations that lead to the denial of increments, significant changes in employment, or termination of employment.
- l. Shall not assist entry into or continuance in the profession of any person known to be unqualified in accordance with these Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida and other applicable Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rules.
- m. Shall self-report within 48 hours to appropriate authorities (as determined by district) any arrest/charges involving the abuse of a child or the sale and/or possession of a controlled substance. Such notice shall not be considered an admission of guilt nor shall notice be admissible for any purpose in any proceeding, civil or criminal, administrative or judicial, investigatory or adjudicatory. In addition, shall self-report any conviction, finding of guilt, withholding of adjudication, commitment to a pretrial diversion program, or entering of a plea of guilty or Nolo Contendere for any criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation within 48 hours after the final judgment. When handling sealed and expunged records disclosed under this rule, school districts shall comply with the confidentiality provisions of Sections 943.0585(4) C and 9432.059(4) C, Florida Statutes.
- n. Shall report to appropriate authorities any known allegations of a violation of the Florida School Code or State Board of Education Rules as defined in Section 231.28(1), Florida Statutes.
- o. Shall seek no reprisal against any individual who has reported violation of Florida School Code or State Board of Education Rules as defined in Section 231.28(1), Florida Statutes.
- p. Shall comply with the conditions of an order of the Education Practices Commission imposing probation, imposing a fine, or restricting the authorized scope of practices.
- q. Shall, as the supervising administrator, cooperate with the Education Practices Commission in monitoring the probation of a subordinate.

DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

No employee, student, or applicant shall on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, marital status, age, religion, or any other basis prohibited by law be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity or in any employment conditions or practices, conducted by the Polk County Public School System.

Statutory Authority: Section 230.22(2), Florida Statutes
Law Implemented: Section 228.2001, Florida Statutes
History: Board Adopted: 05-26-98
 Amended: 07-2-03

WORKPLACE HARASSMENT OF EMPLOYEES

The School Board of Polk County forbids the discrimination against any employee, applicant for employment, or student on the basis of sex or race. The Board will not tolerate sexual/racial harassment activity by any of its employees. This policy also applies to non-employee volunteers who work subject to the control of school authorities.

Sexual harassment consists of un-welcomed sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other inappropriate verbal, nonverbal, graphic, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, as a term or condition of employment or of an individual's education.
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for an employment or academic decision affecting that individual; or
- such conduct substantially interferes with an employee's work performance or student's academic performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or school environment.

Sexual harassment, as defined above, may include but is not limited to the following:

- verbal, non-verbal, graphic, and written harassment or abuse;
- pressure for sexual activity;
- repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications;
- unwelcome or inappropriate touching;
- suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one's employment.

Racial harassment consists of verbal, nonverbal, graphic, written, or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward any employee based upon race when such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; or when such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or employment opportunities.

Racial harassment as defined above may include but is not limited to the following conduct which is based upon race:

- epithets and slurs;
- written or graphic material that shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group;
- negative stereotyping;
- threatening, intimidating or hostile acts.

SPECIFIC PROHIBITIONS

It is sexual harassment for a school board employee or non-employee volunteer to use his or her authority to solicit sexual favors or attention from subordinates or students, including but not limited to incidents when the subordinate's or student's failure to submit will result in adverse treatment, or when the subordinate's or student's acquiescence will result in preferential treatment. It is racial harassment for a school board employee or non-employee volunteer to create or be responsible for a racially hostile environment i.e., harassing conduct that is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent so far as to interfere with or limit the ability of an employee or student to participate in or benefit from services, activities, or privileges provided by the District.

PROCEDURES

Any person who alleges sexual/racial harassment by any staff member may use the Education Equity Complaint/Grievance procedure or may complain directly to his/her supervisor or equity Coordinator. If the direct administrator or supervisor is the offending person, the report should be made to the next higher level of administration or supervision or the Equity Coordinator. Filing of a complaint or otherwise reporting sexual/racial harassment will not affect the individual's status, future employment, future promotion, extracurricular activities or work assignments.

The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected, consistent with the Board's legal obligations, and with the necessity to investigate allegation of misconduct and take corrective action when this conduct has occurred.

In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual/racial harassment, the totality of the circumstances, the nature of the conduct and the context in which the alleged conduct occurred will be investigated. The Superintendent or designee has the responsibility of investigating and resolving complaints of sexual/racial harassment.

A substantiated charge against a Board employee shall subject such employee to disciplinary action, including but not limited to warning, suspension, or termination, subject to applicable procedural requirements.

Any employee, applicant for employment, student, or applicant for admission who believes he/she has been discriminated against or harassed is encouraged to use the District's established complaint procedures or directly contact his/her supervisor or building principal or the Director of Equity and Compliance at:

Patricia W. Hunter, Sr. Coordinator
Equity and Compliance
Human Resource Services
1907 South Floral Avenue
Bartow, FL 33830
Telephone: 863-534-0513 or 534-0517
FAX: 863-534-0770
Email: patricia.hunter@polk-fl.net

(Note: The term "racial harassment" in this policy refers to all forms of discrimination prohibited by Title VI-race, color, and national origin.)

Statutory Authority: Section 230.22(2), Florida Statutes History Board Approved: 05-26-98
Law Implemented: Section 231.28(5), Florida Statutes

HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 1996 (HIPAA)

HIPAA

- Federal Law - Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)
- Purpose - Health Insurance Reform
- Provides Portability for Employees and their families when they change or lose their jobs
- Provides Security and Privacy for Health Data
- Provides Criminal & Civil Penalties for Violations

COMPLIANCE

- To the extent required by law, the School Board of Polk County, Florida, will comply with HIPAA.

PRIVACY – PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION (PHI)

- PHI is confidential health information that contains student or employee “identifiers” in any form: electronic, paper-based or oral.
- Individually Identifiable Health Information (IIHI) is information about the physical or mental health of an individual that identifies or can reasonably identify the individual, i.e. name, social security number, date of birth, etc.
- PHI shall not be shared or discussed with persons not having appropriate authority to receive confidential information either at work or away from work.
- Employee records and information that include PHI are confidential.
- Student records and information that include PHI are confidential.
- Student records and information are confidential and are covered by the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- If in doubt, do not discuss or distribute any PHI or confidential student records and information to third parties. Ask your supervisor before making any decisions to discuss or disclose sensitive information.

EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

- Notice of Privacy Practices
- Right to Restrict Use and Disclosure of PHI
- Right of Access / Right to Inspect and Copy your PHI
- Right to Amend PHI
- Right to file Complaints with the School Board of Polk County, Florida and/or the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services

DISCLOSURES & VIOLATIONS

- Penalties for disclosure may include fines of \$50,000 - \$250,000 and imprisonment for up to 10 years.
- Penalties for noncompliance may include fines up to \$1,000 per occurrence: maximum fines up to \$25,000 per year.
- Violations may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. In addition, violations may be prosecuted under state and/or federal law.

DRUG FREE WORKPLACE

In compliance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, the School Board publishes an annual statement notifying employees that unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by employees is prohibited. This includes any school-related activities away from or on School Board premises.

To facilitate enforcement of the Policy, following an offer of employment by School Board of Polk County, all job applicants will be required to take and pass a drug test. Current employees will be tested for drugs and/or alcohol for any of the following: 1.) reasonable suspicion/cause; 2.) post accident/injury- all employees involved in any way, in any accident whether bodily injury has occurred or not will be tested; 3.) random testing for employees under the Federal Department of Transportation of Drug-Free Workplace Program; 4.) follow up after an employee returns from a drug treatment or counseling program; and 5.) as part of a routine fitness of duty examination if required by the School Board of Polk County. Refusal to submit to testing upon request, for any of the reasons authorized, shall subject the employee to the same disciplinary consequences as would result from a positive test result including termination for cause, denial of Unemployment and Worker's Compensation, and medical and indemnity benefits.

Any employee violating the policy shall be immediately suspended by the Superintendent of Schools, and the Superintendent is hereby directed to report any violation to the School Board for further action, which could result in termination of employment.

Failure by any School Board employee to report a known violation of this policy will constitute an act of insubordination and willful neglect of duty. Employees need to be aware that compliance with the School Board Policy is mandatory, and violators will be referred for prosecution.

Employee Assistance Programs are available by contacting the Employee Relations Office at (863) 534-0786.

ADDITIONAL DISTRICT REFERENCES

In addition to this Employee Handbook, four excellent reference sources are:

School Board Policies
Vacancy Postings/Website

School/Department Handbooks
Collective Bargaining Agreements

School Board Policies

Information about our district and school board policies can be accessed from our website at www.polk-fl.net.

School/Department Handbooks

Many district departments produce an excellent and informative handbook pertaining to the services and procedures applicable to their departments. Schools produce the handbooks/handouts specific to the campus and population of the individual school. This is a great source for specific policies and procedures, available instructional materials, and campus "whereabouts."

Collective Bargaining Unit Agreements

For information specific to your own position, refer to your respective Official Bargaining Unit Agreement. A copy of each Agreement is available for perusal at each school/department or the website at www.polk-fl.net. The Agreements are very detailed regarding the procedures and provisions applicable to your position within the District. Three Agreements exist with the Polk County Public Schools System:

PEA - Polk Education Association - Represents teachers, paraeducators, and educational support personnel (Clerical)

AFSCME Local 2227 - Represents maintenance, warehouse vehicle services, warehouse, EERS, foodservice

AFSCME Council 79 - Represents bus drivers and bus attendants

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE SOURCES

Countless numbers of additional reference sources can provide you with the information that you are seeking. Below is a listing of just some of the sources which contain information relevant to the information presented in this Employee Handbook.

AIDS Hotline

US Public Health Service 1-800-342-AIDS
State Hotline 1-800-272-AIDS

Americans with Disabilities Act

1-800-669-EEOC TDD number 1-800-800-3302

Division of Workers' Compensation-Employee Assistance Office

1-800-342-1741

Education Standards Commission: The Code of Ethics of the Education Profession

Florida Education Center, Room 224
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399
850-488-1523 Suncom 278-1523

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

1801 L Street, NW
Washington, DC 20507
Information on all EEOC-enforced laws 1-800-669-EEOC
TDD number for hearing impaired 1-800-800-3302
FACTS SHEETS 202-663-4395 or 202-663-4399 (TDD)

FIRN Yellow Pages

FIRN, Dept. of Education
FEC B1-14,
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400
850-487-911 Suncom 277-0911

Florida Commission of Education Reform and Accountability

107 West Gaines Street, Suite 224-B
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400
850-922-7179 Fax 850-922-7179

Florida Retirement System-Division of Retirement

Division of Retirement
Cedars Executive Center, Building C
2639 North Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1560
850-488-6491 Suncom 278-6469 TDD 1-800-955-8771

Internal Revenue Service

Publication 503 Child and Dependent Care Expenses
Publication 525 Taxable and Non-Taxable Income
1-800-829-3678

Professional Practices Services, Department of Education

850-488-1636 Suncom 278-2481

School Improvement Hotline

1-800-447-1636 850-487-8783 Suncom 227-8783

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK & BENEFITS INFORMATION

2007-2009

Section 2 Departments

Assessment, Accountability and Evaluation	Information Systems and Technology
Business Services Division	Internal Audit Services
Certification, Endorsement, and NCLB	K-12 Reading
Community Relations	Learning Division
Elementary Education	Legal Services
Employee Relations	Library Media Services
English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	Magnet, Choice, and Charter Schools
Equity and Compliance	Minority Relations
Exceptional Student Education	Office of Fine Arts
Facilities and Operations	Personnel
Federal Programs	Polk Education Foundation
Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resource System (FDLRS)	Professional Development
Grants and Acquisitions	Secondary Education
Human Resource Services	School Based Operations
	Specialized Services
	Student Services
	Support Services
	Workforce Education

ASSESSMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY AND EVALUATION

Wilma Ferrer, Senior Director

The Office of Assessment, Accountability and Evaluation consists of the following areas of Assessment, Research, and Evaluation and Accountability.

Assessment: The Office of Assessment oversees the security and implementation of all state and district mandated testing programs: Florida Kindergarten Readiness System (FLKRS); Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT); FCAT RETAKES; FCAT Writing Plus; Alternate Assessment for ESE students (FAAR); Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment (CELLA); Stanford Achievement Test 10 (SAT 10); National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP); Stanford Diagnostic Reading /Math Test (SDRT/MT); Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA); Diagnostic Assessment of Reading (DAR); and the Polk Portfolio for retained 3rd graders. This office provides technical assistance and support to district and school based personnel on all state and district mandated testing programs as well as distribution and interpretation of results. FCAT results are used for the designation of School Grades and NCLB-AYP.

Research and Evaluation: The Office of Research and Evaluation works in collaboration with District personnel to design and conduct evaluation and research projects for the improvement of instructional and non-instructional programs, including developing and evaluation and research instruments; conducting statistical analyses; and interpreting evaluation and research results. The office coordinates and processes requests to conduct research from internal and external researchers as well, and facilitates the activities of the Research Review Board, including consulting with external evaluators and researchers to ensure the provision of quality. The office also serves as a resource for various committees and task forces in determining related evaluation activities, including evaluation components for grants, as well as for District programs and initiatives. In addition, the office provides technical assistance and training in program evaluation and research to District personnel, administrators, and other stakeholders.

Accountability: The Office of Accountability acts as the district liaison for Florida's System of School Improvement and our schools to provide resources and technical assistance with the completion, implementation, and evaluation of School Improvement Plans and Accountability Plans. These plans serve as guides for schools and include measurable goals, research-based strategies, and evaluation tools for improving student achievement. The office works with the Florida Department of Education after designation of School Grades and AYP to provide support and resources to our challenged schools while implementing the Florida Continuous Improvement Model. This office also assists with the inclusion of parents and community members in our schools and district through School Advisory Councils and a District Advisory Council while monitoring council memberships in accordance with Sunshine Law and Florida Statutes.

Testing & Data Analysis: The Office of Testing and Data Analysis is responsible for providing training, technical assistance, and support to district and school based personnel on data analysis and the interpretation of standardized test results, School Grades and AYP. This information and training is used by schools to gather baseline and formative information in an effort to measure the impact of professional development programs. In addition, this office assists with special data analysis for schools and other district decisions makers for specific program requirements. The office is also responsible for the scanning, scoring and reporting of the Stanford achievement Test 10 (SAT 10), Stanford Diagnostic Reading/Math Test (SDRT/MT), and for overseeing the security and implementation of the PSAT for 10th grade students attending Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and Alternative Education sites.

BUSINESS SERVICES DIVISION

Mark Grey, Assistant Superintendent

The Business Services Division consists of the following departments: Finance, Accounting, Payroll, Food Service, Risk Management, and Purchasing.

Accounting Director, Ed Flood – The Accounting Department is responsible for the preparation of monthly and annual financial reports. Accounting is also responsible for processing payments to all vendors and recording of revenues received from all sources. Accounting maintains the records for all the funds of the school district including general operations, capital outlay, debt service, federal grants, food service, self-insurance, and student activity expenses.

Finance Director, Audra Curts – The Finance Department is primarily responsible for the preparation and maintenance of the District’s budget. Other areas of responsibility to include the following: financial reporting of all local, state, and federal grants and contracts; maintaining and auditing property records/physical assets of the District; preparation of the annual districtwide cost report; school recognition & Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate bonuses; teacher lead stipends; substitute allocations, appeals and tracking by school/department; charter school funds distribution and financial oversight; and public relations related to finance

Food Service Director, Marcia Smith –The school foodservice department is responsible for providing breakfast and lunch to the students in Polk County Public Schools. The department also participates in the after-school snack program. During the summer, meals are supplied through the summer feeding program. On average, over 12 million meals are served annually. The program is funded with federal and state funds and revenue generated at the local level from student and adult sales. The district does not receive reimbursement for adult meals. The School Board sets meal prices. District-wide menus are planned in accordance with USDA guidelines and with input from the students. Free and reduced price meals are offered to students who qualify. The applications for free and reduced price meals are processed at the district office.

Payroll Director, Dana Torres – The Payroll Department is responsible for accurate and timely processing of the District’s compensation plan. The Payroll Department coordinates with the Human Resources Department to ensure that all employees are compensated in accordance with District policy and collective bargaining agreements.

Purchasing, Warehousing & Printing Services Director, Scott Clanton – The Purchasing Department is responsible for procurement services including the preparation of bids and requests for proposals, warehousing and distribution services, printing services, and the administration of telecommunication activities for the District.

The Purchasing Services Department is responsible for the procurement of a wide variety of supplies, equipment, foods, and contractual services for the District. While most of the departmental activities are required by state/federal laws and Board Policy, the District benefits from substantial cost savings associated with competitive bidding and large volume purchases.

The Warehousing and Distribution Center is responsible for the receipt, storage, and delivery of a wide variety of supplies, testing materials, equipment, food items, and maintenance materials for the District. Subsequent to the contracts and purchases administered by the Purchasing Department, the Warehouse receives, stores, and delivers on a weekly basis (or as needed) the above items to all schools and program centers, thereby relieving them of the task of ordering from a multiplicity of vendors. Also, the Warehouse is responsible for managing surplus property, classroom and office relocations, and the installation of furniture and equipment for large construction projects.

The Printing Services Department is responsible for providing a wide variety of printing and related services for the District. Schools and centers utilizing the Printing Services Department have found it to be an efficient and cost effective operation, helping them to get the most from printing and reproduction budgeted funds.

Risk Management Director, Steve Henderson – Risk Management is responsible for the administration of our health insurance plans for over 13,000 covered members. They provide for additional benefits for employees, including dental and vision coverage, disability coverage, and tax-sheltered annuities. Risk Management also administers other types of programs for the District, such as property, general liability, and worker’s compensation.

System Applications Director, Cyndi Wolf -The System Applications team optimizes business processes for all district shareholders by facilitating, designing, implementing, and monitoring those processes. The team provides SAP R/3 system support, maintenance, enhancements and upgrades for each of the district’s major business areas including Finance, Accounting, Payroll, Risk Management, Human Resource Services, Human Resource Development, Purchasing, Warehousing, Facilities & Maintenance, Transportation, and EERS.

CERTIFICATION, ENDORSEMENT AND NCLB

Donna Wingard, Director

The Office of Teacher Certification, Endorsement and No Child Left Behind, a part of the District's Human Resource Services Division, directs, oversees and enforces the employment, licensure and/or certification of school administrators, teachers, paraeducators and substitute teachers. This Office also plans, directs and oversees the District's New Employee, Substitute Employee and Athletic Coaching Orientations.

Teacher Certification: Certification/NCLB Compliance staff verifies and monitors certification status of the district's teachers. They provide essential counsel to administrators and teachers on certification issues, including advising current and potential employees relating to certification, qualifications and compliance, as well as screening and approving applicants for hire, the collection and processing of fees and applications for initial certification, renewals, additions, and name changes.

Endorsement: Certification/NCLB Compliance staff assists and monitors teachers needing endorsements in order to ensure consistency with the School Board and Superintendent's broad policies and objectives.

No Child Left Behind Personnel Compliance: Certification/NCLB Compliance Staff evaluates the qualifications of teachers and paraeducators to determine compliance with NCLB federal legislation. An important component of this process is an advisory role with teachers and paraeducators, assisting them in meeting the requirements.

Substitute Employee Management System (SEMS): This Office also oversees the automated calling system used to report teachers' absences and secure substitute teachers to cover those absences.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Leah Lauderdale, Senior Director, APR, CPRC

The Department of Community Relations is responsible for three main areas of service to Polk County Public Schools: public/media relations, community involvement, and broadcast communications.

The public relations sector of Community Relations works with schools and district staff as the key communications outlet to the media, the public, and other educational partners. Its job is to compile and disseminate appropriate and accurate information regarding key district messages, initiatives, and circumstances; direct inquiring parties to the appropriate district official for further information; and advise district staff on matters of public relations importance. This includes the drafting of press releases, copy and speech writing, assistance with public presentations, creation of printed and electronic publications, coordination of crisis communications, issues management, monitoring and reporting on media coverage of public schools, handling of public information and media requests, management of district office front reception area, and other projects and programs as assigned by the Office of the Superintendent. The public relations sector also coordinates a number of special events, traditionally including new school groundbreakings, special recognitions at school board meetings, and various student, staff, and school awards ceremonies.

The community involvement sector of Community Relations works within several arenas. It is responsible for the recruitment, application process, training, and recognition of volunteers for all schools in the district, including youth and adult mentoring programs. It engages and encourages locally active businesses to support district public schools in various forms and fashions. It coordinates the Polk chapter of the national Learn and Serve program. It also oversees the community service component of high school graduation requirements.

The broadcast communications sector of Community Relations is responsible for audio/visual support at school board meetings and disciplinary hearings, various special events, and other projects as assigned. It prepares footage for replay on local access cable television and acts as a liaison to these stations. The sector is also currently involved in helping to coordinate the launch of a public education channel to be broadcast over cable television.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION
Diana Myrick, Debra Edmiston, Charlene Brinson, Katheryn Curtis, Senior Directors

The Polk County Comprehensive Core Curriculum is based on the Florida Sunshine State Standards and outlines the benchmarks by grade level along with the Grade Level Expectations for elementary students.

In addition, curriculum alignment and planning guides in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and the arts were developed to promote consistency across the district. These planning guides incorporate Sunshine State Standards, the Grade Level Expectations, textbooks, and other materials that teachers may access. These documents may be found on the elementary website at www.polk-fl.net.

Report cards shall be issued to students in grades K-5 each nine weeks (12 weeks in balanced calendar schools). Grades on report cards reflect the student’s level of achievement. Parents must be made aware of student progress that is below the standards established for the student’s grade placement.

Grading Scale:

Kindergarten	S	Satisfactory	
	NI	Needs Improvement	
Grades 1-5	A	Outstanding	90-100
	B	Above Average	80-89
	C	Average	70-79
	D	Below Average	60-69
	U	Unsatisfactory	0-59

Students in grades 1-5 who do not meet the district standards of performance in reading, writing or mathematics, or who do not meet the state standards of performance on statewide assessments tests, will be provided remediation through the development of an Academic Improvement Plan (AIP). Students who are in Grade 3 must pass the FCAT at Level 2 or higher or meet one of the good cause exemptions to be promoted. In addition, a student must have an overall C average in academic subjects.

The Polk County Student Progression Plan provides the School Board rules and administrative procedures required for implementing state legislative and local school board pupil progression requirements. Particular emphasis will be placed upon the pupil’s mastery of basic skills before he/she is promoted. The responsibility for determining each student’s performance and ability to function academically, socially, and emotionally in the next grade is that of the classroom teacher in conjunction with the principal. However, the final decision for grade placement is the responsibility of the principal and is within the guidelines of the law.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

The Employee Relations Office acts on behalf of the School Board and the Superintendent in dealing with a variety of issues concerning School Board employees. It is the goal of this office to provide a harmonious and productive school and work environment that respects and protects the individual rights of employees, students, and parents. The Office of Employee Relations seeks to be proactive and to offer collaborative problem-solving as a means of avoiding or resolving work place conflict.

This office is the arm of the Superintendent and the School Board that is responsible for the five certified collective bargaining units representing various groups of School Board employees. Employee Relations handles the annual renegotiations of each of those collective bargaining agreements and the administration of each agreement throughout the year, including issues of contract interpretation, mediating disputes, and processing grievances filed pursuant to the collective bargaining agreements. Employee Relations provides similar functions for non-represented employees through the policies and procedures established by the School Board.

Another responsibility of the Employee Relations Office is to work closely with the Office of Equity and Compliance in dealing with complaints of discrimination and harassment. The Employee Relations Office also provides in-service training on compliance issues including sexual harassment prevention training.

Additionally, the Employee Relations Office coordinates the activities involved with investigating complaints and/or allegations of misconduct against School Board employees and prepares the documentation of investigations and follow-up activities. The Office also reviews criminal histories that result from fingerprinting new hires as well as Level II screening requirements and ensures compliance as required by applicable laws and hiring policies of the School Board. It also responds to questions regarding Unemployment Claims and represents the School Board in Unemployment Compensation Hearings at the Local and State level.

Other responsibilities of the Employee Relations Office include supervisor referrals of employees to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), administering the sick leave bank, approving and reviewing leaves of absence, and advising employees on retirement issues as well as processing documentation for retirement. Furthermore, a significant role that is played by this Office is that of providing independent counseling to both employees and supervisors as a means of assisting in the resolution of work-related problems involving both performance and discipline-based issues.

ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL)

Chane Eplin, Director

The ESOL Department's primary focus and responsibility is to ensure that Limited English Proficient students (LEP) receive English language instruction, comprehensible instruction, and equal access to other appropriate programs necessary for them to function effectively and actively participate in the regular school program.

The ESOL district personnel will oversee and assist schools with the implementation of the 1990 League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) et al v. the State Board of Education (SBE) Consent Decree and the September, 2003 Modification to the Consent Decree:

- Identification of students
- Assessment of potential LEP students
- Comprehensive Program Requirements and Student Instruction
- Exit Criteria and Procedures
- Monitoring Procedures for LEP students
- Parents/Guardians/Students Notification and Rights
- Functions of the LEP Committee Personnel training

The ESOL staff annually submits a grant proposal to obtain federal funding for the Title III, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and other special programs for LEP students. This entitlement grant allows the ESOL staff and schools to respond to the needs of Limited English Proficient Students and immigrant students beyond the district's responsibility as determined in The Consent Decree. Title III increases the amount of information that must be presented to parents of LEP students; therefore, the district provides an ESOL translator to assist the schools with parent notification.

EQUITY AND COMPLIANCE

Patricia Hunter, Senior Coordinator

The mission of the Office of Equity and Compliance is to ensure that the Polk County Public School District complies with state and federal laws pertaining to educational equity and access.

The Office of Equity and Compliance has major responsibilities for the investigation of allegations of harassment and discrimination brought by employees or students who believe they have been the object of the violation of their civil rights. This office monitors School Board Policies pertaining to the treatment of employees, students, applicants for employment and admission of students to education programs, disability, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, Title IX, and Sex Discrimination. This office is the contact for persons requiring special accommodations to participate in school district meetings under the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Office of Equity and Compliance investigates allegations of Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA) violations. The office is responsible for the coordination of the Consent Decree for Desegregation. The office negotiates and interprets federally enforced desegregation requirements, which includes analyzing school boundaries and periodic updates, and monitors compliance with a federal court order.

The Office of Equity and Compliance prepares reports to the Florida Department of Education, Office of Equity and Access pertaining to student achievement in conjunction with other district-level administrators.

EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION

Polk County's Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Department meets the needs of over 15,500 students from preschool age through 21 years of age. The programs that serve our entire ESE population are Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), Speech and Language, Hearing Impaired (HI), Emotionally Handicapped, Physically Handicapped, Autistic, Visually Impaired (VI), Mentally Handicapped, Orthopedic Impaired, Hospital/Homebound, and Gifted.

The ESE Department has over 800 teachers who participate in professional development throughout the year to ensure continued success for the children and young adults they serve. Related services including occupational therapy, physical therapy, mental health counseling, assistive technology, and audiological evaluations are provided to the students as needed.

The ESE Department enhances the instructional program of every school by helping students who are encountering roadblocks to successful learning. The ESE Department facilitates the evaluation of the at-risk students to identify individual student needs and provides support to students with disabilities.

The ESE District Facilitators provide professional development to general education teachers and paraeducators in the following areas: Differentiated Instruction, Accommodations and Modifications, Adaptive/Assistive Technology, Collaborative Planning and Teaching (CPT), Strategic Instructional Model (SIM), Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS), Transitional Programs/Services, Florida Uniting Students in Education (FUSE-Inclusive Practices), Revitalizing Instruction for Students and Educators (RISE), Autism Spectrum Disorders and Asperger's Syndrome and Educational Strategies for the general classroom.

FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS **Bob Williams, Assistant Superintendent**

The Facilities and Operations Division is responsible for the planning, design, and construction of all new buildings; remodeling and renovation projects; custodial and grounds services; and maintenance and energy management. Architectural Services directs the activities of outside architectural firms as well as in-house drafting of many smaller projects. Construction Services provides inspection services for all projects and supervises all outside contractors, as well as maintaining an in-house construction department. Custodial Services cleans all schools and provides mowing and grounds services. Maintenance Services performs preventative maintenance and keeps all school buildings and equipment in operating condition. Energy Management helps the schools and departments control energy usage to reduce consumption, improve comfort, and save dollars.

FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Rhonda Ashley, Director

Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 provides additional funds to support instructional services in schools with a high concentration of economically disadvantaged students. In Polk County, Title I provides resources for approximately 33,000 students in 46 elementary schools, 7 middle schools, 3 charter schools, 3 conversion charter schools, and 9 private schools. In addition, assistance is provided to children classified as “migrant, neglected, homeless, and delinquent throughout the entire district.

Title I funds are used to provide for family involvement, professional development, additional instructional units, extended learning time for students, supplementary resource and instructional materials, and additional instructional equipment to support the existing curriculum. Title I funds provide opportunities for schools to undertake school-wide reform, supported by scientifically based research.

The goal of Title I is to increase student achievement through effective instruction, professional development, and family involvement.

FLORIDA DIAGNOSTIC & LEARNING RESOURCE SYSTEM (FDLRS)

Sherwin Holmes, Senior Manager

The FDLRS Sunrise Resource Center, serving Polk and Hardee counties, is one of the nineteen associate centers developed by the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Student Services, and Exceptional Education, funded through federal dollars and state general revenue money. This network has supported educators, families, and agencies working with children with disabilities or special needs for over twenty-five years. The FDLRS Sunrise Resource Center is located at 5204 US Highway 98 South and is part of the Polk County School System. FDLRS is a statewide network providing diagnostic and instructional support services for district exceptional education programs and families of students with disabilities. FDLRS supports the state education goals of high student achievement, safe schools, and high performing workforce. FDLRS activity outcomes reflect these goals.

The four functions of FDLRS are as follows:

- **Child Find** assists in locating, identifying, evaluating, and initiating appropriate education or other needed services to all children birth-5 years of age.
- **Technology** provides assistance and support in the appropriate use of assistive, instructional and communications technologies for professional staff and gives support to families of students with exceptionalities or special needs.
- **Human Resource Development** plans collaboratively with school districts, ESE departments, staff development offices, and others to provide information, professional development, and technical assistance about effective instructional strategies and service delivery models for the education of children and youth who are exceptional or have unique needs.
- **Parent Service** assists districts and families who have children who are exceptional or have special needs to develop effective partnerships with agencies and/or support groups, allowing shared responsibility to improve education of all children and youth.

FDLRS offers a wide variety of training options for beginning to tenured teachers as well as other staff members who are seeking skill development or in-service points. Online classes are available free of charge to help teachers prepare for the ESE certification exam. Information may be found in our quarterly newsletter, the **FDLRS Contact**, at www.fdlrssunrise.com to find out about other professional development opportunities. The website shares many links relating to exceptional student education.

GRANTS AND ACQUISITIONS

Marcia Ford, Director

District Support-The District Grants Team writes and submits grant proposals for interdepartmental, district wide and interagency projects. The Grants Team is available to support other departments with strategic planning that includes assessing needs; organizing and analyzing information; planning and managing meetings; lining up evaluation resources; writing clear and concise narratives; and presenting easily read, eye-catching, technical documents.

School Support-District Grants Team goals include empowering grant-writing teams in schools, and various resources are dedicated to this support. The department's web site, <http://www.polk-fl.net/grants>, includes a continually updated page of links to grant sources currently available for schools and teachers. The department offers an information packet explaining various resources and procedures to help aspiring grant applicants throughout the district. The department hosts training workshops, using the Human Resource Development online scheduler and awarding in-service points for follow-up projects. The department also hosts coaching sessions for data research, responding to grant guidelines, and attractive presentation.

Administration-Grant applications require School Board approval, and the District Grants Team processes these submissions on behalf of all applicants. The department archives application information and produces routine, district-wide grants activity reports for the superintendent. The team networks widely and tracks funding trends to help district officials make informed decisions.

HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES

The Human Resource Services Division is responsible for personnel services, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- District Recruiting
- District Vacancies
- Employee Applications
- Employee Contracts
- Employee Orientation
- Employee Relations
- Employee Retirement
- Equity and Compliance
- Experience Verification
- Leaves of Absence
- Personnel Records
- Professional Standards
- Teacher Certification
- Salary and Compensation Policies & Procedures
- Sick Leave Bank
- Substitute Teachers
- Teacher Unit Allocations

Our publications include the following: Employee Handbook, Salary Handbook, Staffing Plan, Substitute Teacher Manual, Collective Bargaining Agreements, and many others.

The Human Resource Services Division encourages you to remain current with changes in policies or procedures that affect your employment. The staff welcomes your inquiries. Office hours are from 7:30am to 5:00pm weekdays.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGY

Abdu Taguri, Assistant Superintendent

The Information Systems and Technology Division is responsible for the support of all school board employees and students in their use of technology. The department communicates and collaborates with all stakeholders to explore future system enhancements in hardware, software, and applications. They also install, repair, network, and provide interoperability for all systems. The department provides opportunities for training at all levels, complies with national, state and district guidelines and policies, and acts as a clearinghouse of information on all issues relating to technology. They develop support documents and applications for users; plan for technological expansion, purchases and upgrades; and monitor access and security in all systems. They ensure appropriate access to hardware, software, and networking for all employees and students; provide instruction to foster competence in information literacy; and stimulate interest in reading and viewing

information beyond the classroom, ensuring that all members of schools and communities are effective users of ideas and information as presented in ever changing formats.

Information Systems and Technology provides these services through seven major departments: Network Department, Data Processing, School Technology, Instructional TV, EERS, Systems Applications, and Information Services.

The Network Department provides network services to the schools in the District, including, but not limited to, network design, installation of network infrastructure, and repair and replacement of network infrastructure. They also recommend, install, and maintain all file servers to include instructional, media, and administrative. The Network Department maintains the data connectivity from the District Office to all district locations. They also maintain the computer equipment and Point of Sale registers in all school cafeterias and the circulation system in use by all district media centers.

Data Processing is responsible for developing system enhancements in software and applications, as well as facilitating compliance with national, state, and district guideline and policies. We also act as a clearinghouse of information, develop support documents and applications for users, and accommodate technological expansion, purchases, and upgrades. Data processing provides programming and analysis support for the major administrative application including Student Information System-GENESIS. Data Processing Computer Operations provides support for all Enterprise printing including report cards and payroll checks. They also provide Help Desk support and training for GENESIS, EleGrade, and Outlook. Additional support is provided for Windows, Office Suite, Pinnacle and Destiny.

The School Technology Department provides instructional technology resources, support, training, planning, program implementation, and assessment to schools for integrating technology with instruction and promoting teaching and learning with technology.

Instructional TV supports the use of multimedia technology throughout the district, utilizing the TV studios and closed circuit television systems in each school. In addition, this department maintains the district-wide television network, which is used for academic enrichment programming, distance learning, and staff training and communication.

The purpose of EERS is to provide support, training, troubleshooting, and supervision for all personnel using microcomputers and related support. Activities include organization and assistance in the repair of computers, copiers, typewriters, printers, scanners, audio/visual devices, and other electronic equipment; and the installation and repair of telecommunications wiring for voice, data, and video systems. The computer software and hardware support includes computer networks, mainframe computer emulation and connectivity, network printing, operating systems, e-mail, software applications, and end-user support. It also provides design support for client/server hardware and software recommendations, telecommunications wiring, and troubleshooting.

Information Services' major responsibilities include supervision of all aspects of student information for Polk County Schools. Specific activities include student scheduling, FTE, grade reporting, calculation of the district/schools graduation rate, student enrollment, record management, and the electronic transmission of student transcripts. Other activities include training of school personnel and reporting of student information to the Department of Education.

<p>INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES Sheila Phelps, Senior Manager</p>
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The Internal Audit Services Department reports directly to the School Board of Polk County, Florida. The unique function of this department protects the interests and assets of the School Board by internally reviewing the School District's business transactions.

The *Internal Audit Charter* states that "the purpose of the Internal Audit is to determine that the District's stated policies and procedures are being followed by employees at all levels of management. The objective is to provide the School Board and management of the District with information about the adequacy and effectiveness of the District's system of internal controls and the quality of performance in carrying out assigned responsibilities. Internal Audit will furnish the School Board and management of the District with analyses, appraisals, recommendations, counsel, and information concerning the activities reviewed." Internal Audit assists the School Board in managing risks, including financial, operating, and other business risks, by measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of internal controls and recommending enhancements or corrective actions as needed. Internal Audit also coordinates and directs audits of departments, programs, and schools whose budget the board has approved to determine adherence to board policies and budget intent.

K-12 READING
Ann Tankson, Senior Director

It is the responsibility of the Reading K-12 Senior Director to monitor the effective implementation of the K-12 Comprehensive Researched-Based Reading Plan. The plan clearly states the responsibility at each level of implementation: state, district, and school. The K-12 Reading Department will work closely with the administrators and the reading coach at all schools in the district to build a shared knowledge base of reading, teaching, and learning throughout the school, and to provide leadership to the district and school-based personnel promoting reading excellence for all students.

Through collaborative efforts, the senior director monitors assessment data/information collected from fidelity checks to determine schools' progress in meeting the requirements as outlined in the K-12 Comprehensive Research-based Reading Plan. The department works with the reading staff/reading leadership team at each school to determine initial interventions and, based on need, provides support, and intensity of interventions. The department identifies scientifically-based reading programs and strategies that will improve the reading performance of elementary and secondary students as measured by the FCAT/SAT 10. Emphasis is placed on restructuring the way reading is approached and reading instruction is delivered.

Ongoing collaboration among educators is designed to promote a better articulated reading curriculum and to keep teachers informed about data usage, research-based reading programs, and scientifically-based reading/teaching strategies--thus fostering higher student achievement. The K-12 Reading Department provides professional development activities on scientific research-based reading programs that focus on the key reading essential components, differentiated instruction, reading block, and flexible grouping. The programmatic training will include training of the comprehensive core, supplemental, and intervention reading programs. All professional development is correlated to data from screening, ongoing progress monitoring, and outcome measures.

It is the goal of Polk County Schools' K-12 Comprehensive Research-based Reading Plan and the Senior Director for Reading to implement and monitor developmental, accelerated, and preventive reading program requirements as well as to diagnose and accelerate reading performance that will ensure that students can read on grade level before entering third grade.

LEARNING DIVISION
Dr. Sherrie Nickell, Associate Superintendent

The goal of the Learning Division is to promote and enhance student achievement at all levels. The division provides appropriate programs and curriculum to meet the needs of students.

Several Departments are affiliated with the Learning Division. They are Assessment, Accountability and Evaluation, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Exceptional Student Education, Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resource System (FDLRS), Fine Arts, Grants Acquisition, Professional Development, K-12 Reading, and Federal Programs (Title I).

This Division works closely with the staff in the School Based Operations Division to provide services to schools.

LEGAL SERVICES
C. Wesley Bridges, II, General Counsel

The Legal Services Department reports directly to the School Board and provides in-house legal advice and counsel to the School Board, Superintendent, principals, and other school officials and district staff on legal issues arising from the operation of schools.

The Department oversees all legal matters pertaining to the School Board, including such areas as:

- Providing advice on all legal issues arising from the day-to-day operation of a school district comprising approximately 90,000 students and 13,000 employees

- Managing and supervising litigation
- Preparing and approving contracts for purchasing and construction
- Preparing and interpreting policy
- Assisting principals and school-based personnel with issues regarding child custody, abuse and neglect, free speech, religious rights, discipline, dress code, and the like
- Compliance with all applicable state, federal and local laws and regulations
- Assisting in strategies to reduce risk and liability.

LIBRARY MEDIA SERVICES
Jacqueline Rose, Senior Coordinator

The Library Media Services Department offers a number of helpful services and programs to aid teachers, faculty, district office staff, students, and members of the community. The three divisions of the Library Media Services Department are the Professional Library, Central Cataloging, and the Film and Video Library.

The Professional Library offers technical and professional resources and materials to teachers, administrators, assistants, and volunteers in the schools, as well as to people in the community. The collection includes approximately 4000 books, access to the Internet, and over 100 professional and educational journals covering all aspects of education, including leadership, classroom management, instructional design, subject area content, and technology related issues. The Professional Library is equipped with a production area for laminating, poster printing, die cutting, dubbing, and other equipment and services necessary in instructional material preparation.

Inter-library loan is available through the Tampa Bay Library Consortium, gaining access to materials from other libraries throughout the country to further assist our schools and their students, staff, and faculty. EBSCO Publishing's **Academic Search Full Text and Elite Full Text** periodical database is available from District Media Services for searching online. Access to other educational online databases for instructional purposes for students can also be accessed from Media Services. The online catalog for all schools and Media Services can be accessed from the Media Services homepage using Destiny.

The Central Cataloging creates original **MARC (Machine Readable Cataloging)** records for the school media centers and professional library. In addition, they also prepare books for inclusion on media center shelves and catalog books, audiovisual materials, and multimedia tools for schools.

The Film and Video Library offers films and videos of educational interest to teachers, administrators, and other school board employees for usage in the classroom setting. A film and video catalog is also available online and can be accessed from Polk County Public School's homepage under Media Services.

MAGNET, CHOICE, AND CHARTER SCHOOLS
Carolyn Finch, Senior Director

The Office of Magnet, Choice and Charter Schools serves students in forty-one schools. Of these schools, seven schools are magnet, eight are choice or partial choice, and twenty-six are charter schools. In addition, the office works with three voucher programs. Almost twenty percent of Polk County students participate in some form of school choice. The Office of Magnet, Choice and Charter Schools works closely with the ESE department to service students who choose to access McKay Scholarships. The office also works with students who qualify and choose to participate in Opportunity Scholarship, as well as provides referral services with regard to corporate scholarships. The office processes almost 6,000 applications annually and maintains the waiting lists for each grade level at each magnet or choice school. The office also oversees the charter application, contract, on-going oversight and evaluation, and renewal processes for each of the charter schools.

MINORITY RELATIONS
Otis Anthony, Senior Director

The Office of Minority Relations is located in the Superintendent’s administrative office. The office plays a central role in driving the collaborative activities of district leadership on issues of diversity, multicultural education, policy initiatives and parent/community involvement. Polk County Schools has approximately 89,493 students. There are 49,965 white students, or 58% of the total student population. African American students number 20,261, or 22.6% of students; Hispanic/Latino students number 16,881, or 18.9%; Asian students number 1,139, or 1.3%. There are 208 Indian/Native American students representing 0.2%, and there are 1,039 other students, or 1.2%. The school district includes the representation of 63 languages and 151 countries. The Spanish language is spoken by 10,891 students, Haitian Creole is spoken by 720 speakers, and Arabic is represented by 100 speakers. The emphasis on Diversity is indicative of the values of the district leadership and a real recognition of the demographic change. The promotion of activities, initiatives, issues, and policies that increases acceptance and inclusion on the part of all students and staff is part of the mission of the Office of Minority Relations. Polk County Schools, under the leadership of Dr. Gail McKinzie, is student-centered and achievement-centered. We believe that all children should have the opportunity to learn and succeed in a competitive world, including minority students. The Office of Minority Relations makes itself available to schools, parents, organizations, and churches who are interested in closing the achievement gap and mentoring our students into a future of hope and unlimited potential.

OFFICE OF FINE ARTS
Frank Howes, Senior Director

It is the responsibility of the Office of Fine Arts to formulate and continually update guidelines for the music, art, dance, and theatre curriculums in grades K-12, in consultation with the Senior Director of Fine Arts, teachers, and administrative staff. The Senior Director is to serve as the supervisor for the performing and visual arts schools and the elementary magnet schools and provides support and services in the following areas:

- Administrator for the placement and evaluation of itinerant music and art teachers district-wide
- Organize and implement training for teachers in all fine arts areas
- Administer and plan all fine arts events, including all-county festivals, showcases, and other arts related events throughout the district
- Prepare bid specifications and proposals in all arts-related areas
- Serve as the liaison for the hiring of arts staff and arts curriculum development at all schools, with particular emphasis for unit allocation at the Harrison Arts Center, Rochelle School of the Arts, Jewett Arts School, and Davenport Arts School
- Develop and administer the district-wide budget for the fine arts programs
- Oversee the adoption of fine arts textbooks, arts media and technology, and other related materials for the district in grades K-12
- Monitor fine arts curriculum to insure compliance with state laws, and serve as the arts liaison with the Florida Department of Education and other District, State, and National arts organizations

PERSONNEL
Linda Searcy, Director

Personnel Services, part of the Human Resource Services Division, provides support and service in the following areas:

Hiring Process: From application to placement in a position, Personnel handles the intake of new employees, including verification of qualifications, assistance with scheduling pre-employment activities, and management of all aspects of New Employee Orientation.

The department handles advertisement of positions and assists in the interview process and placement of administrators.

Personnel Actions: The department processes all personnel actions for the district.

Recruitment: The Recruiting Staff organizes and coordinates the district's teacher recruitment efforts through data analysis, selecting, and training a cadre of recruiters from among staff, researching appropriate recruiting venues, and conducting district job fairs. The Recruiter is a liaison between hiring administrators and potential candidates.

Miscellaneous Responsibilities: Personnel oversees the annual revision of the district's Staffing Plan, the Salary Handbook, and the Employee Handbook. The department regularly updates other documents, such as the Substitute Teacher Handbook. Temporary Duty Applications, Extended Contracts, and Employment Verifications are processed in the department.

POLK EDUCATION FOUNDATION
Susan Copeland, Executive Director

The Polk Education Foundation, founded in 1988, is a direct support 501(c)(3) organization for the Polk County Public School Board. It has raised in excess of \$20,000,000 in the past 17 years and has spent these funds on programs the school system cannot use tax generated dollars to support. The Foundation's endowment has a market value of \$1.4 million, and interest from this endowment, as well as monies from individuals and businesses that make tax deductible donations, helps to support the programs of the PEF. These programs can be separated into five main areas:

Scholarships: The PEF has a continually growing graduating senior scholarship program. In the Class of 2005, over 300 scholarship awards worth over \$500,000 were made to graduates. Another large scholarship program the PEF administers is the Take Stock in Children (TSIC). This program not only has a scholarship component but a mentoring component as well. Students enter the program as ninth graders and have constant contact with their TSIC advocate helping them to stay on track to receive their award when they graduate.

Teacher Recognition/Grant Programs: Our largest teacher grant program, The Teacher to Teacher Connection, rewards teachers for their innovative practices and helps to share their ideas with other teachers. Money is awarded to the teachers who develop the innovative programs and to teachers who need supply money to buy the materials to implement a teaching idea they have seen represented in the program. Other grant awards are offered periodically through the PEF when donors come forward and sponsor a grant program many times in the focus area of their company, or where they know there is a need in the school system.

Teacher/Employee Recognition: We collaborate with many in the community to present the Teacher / Non-Instructional Personnel of the Year Awards. Also, as funding allows, the PEF is able to make grants to instructional personnel to attend workshops to enhance the services they are able to provide to their students. A program is currently in place to reimburse PCSB non-instructional personnel (excluding paraeducators who have access to a similar program) tuition costs for their classes to become a teacher and work in Polk County.

Student Recognition Programs: The PEF helps to sponsor fully or in part programs such as the Spelling Bee, Science Fair, Poetry Awards, and Project Hearth for Homeless students.

Improving Literacy: A large portion of the PEF support goes into our AmeriCorps Polk Reads reading tutoring program. This program targets kindergarten through third grade students who have been determined by their teacher to be at least one level below grade level in reading. Students are tutored in one-on-one sessions, which have been found to be a powerful tool in raising their reading levels.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Bill Strouse, Director

Professional development in the district is conducted in accordance with the 66 FDOE Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol Standards. Professional Development for the school district's Instructional and Leadership Staff is the primary function of the Professional Development Department. Under the guidance of the Director of Professional Development, three Senior Coordinators of Professional Development administer varied processes related to instructional, administrative and other district staff. They also administer evaluation processes for instructional, leadership and professional technical staff and coordinate maintenance of qualified administrative applicant pools. All members of the Professional Development staff engage in the processes of planning, delivery, follow-up and evaluation of professional development as each relates to specific areas of responsibility. Senior Coordinators and Teacher Resource Specialists maintain and monitor processes to assist new teachers in documenting Professional Education Competence, maintain a qualified pool of Peer Coaches, support candidates for National Board Certification, and collaborate with area colleges for the purpose of placing student teacher interns and teacher education program development. Other significant professional development functions administered and coordinated by the Director include maintaining professional development records, working with school leaders and district staff to facilitate school-based and district-wide professional development to support student learning, and

collaborating with area agencies and colleges to achieve district and community educational goals as they relate to the development and maintenance of high quality district faculty.

The Alternative Certification Specialist screens applicants, processes applications, and monitors participants in the Alternative Certification Educators Program. The specialist provides support for the teacher participants who have a Bachelor's degree (in an area other than education) and who hold a Florida temporary certificate, as well as for their peer coaches and administrators. The specialist also recruits and provides support for the required online tutors from the National Board Certified Teacher pool and is the liaison for the online training with Florida Center for Interactive Media, requests logins and passwords, associates online tutors and participants, maintains records, compiles data for reporting purposes, and assists in the development and provision of additional training as needed for the participants.

The Teacher Retention Specialist assists with the facilitation of the Teacher Induction Program Seminar (TIPS) designed to provide all teachers new to Polk County with essential content and support processes unique to the district and applicable to the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices. This teacher specialist also coordinates processes related to teacher retention data analysis and enhancement activities. The Teacher Specialist for Non-Instructional Professional Development coordinates professional development activities related to paraprofessional, clerical staff, and substitute teachers. Three Professional Development Specialists support the work of the Director, Senior Coordinators, and Teacher Resource Specialists, focusing on support processes for planning, delivery, follow-up, and evaluation of professional development.

<p style="text-align: center;">SECONDARY EDUCATION David Lewis, Senior Director, High Schools Brenda Kearsse, Senior Director, Middle Schools</p>
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The Office of Senior Director of High Schools provides supervision and oversight of the instructional programming and operational aspects for Polk County's fourteen high schools, two International Baccalaureate Programs and the Polk Virtual High School. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local regulations, statutes, policies, and procedures in these areas.

Working in concert with other departments and the Senior Curriculum Coordinators within the School Based Operations Division, this office supports the district's mission of providing rigorous, relevant learning experiences that will ensure high achievement for all students in alignment with Strategic Plan initiatives. To accomplish these objectives, this office assists with the allocation of appropriate resources, curriculum development, monitoring and evaluation, professional growth opportunities, and the research and implementation of effective instructional practices and learning strategies.

Other illustrative responsibilities include legislative interpretation, transcript reviews, policy and procedure development, departmental budgeting, and serving as the liaison between the high schools and the district, with other school districts, and the Florida Department of Education. Moreover, it is the charge of this office to coordinate and disseminate the Polk County Student Progression Plan, which details state requirements, School Board rules, and administrative procedures relative to the instructional program.

<p style="text-align: center;">SCHOOL BASED OPERATIONS Dr. Bruce Tonjes, Associate Superintendent</p>

The School Based Operations Division coordinates and supervises operations at the school level. This includes supervision of principals, compliance with local, state, and federal legislation and policies, and communication of updates and issues from the superintendent and school board.

Senior directors of high schools, middle schools, elementary schools, regularly meet with other directors and assistant and associate superintendents to make plans and establish priorities. Meetings with principals, assistant principals, and other school based personnel are held to give updates on new and emerging information. The senior directors are the principals' immediate supervisors and serve as the first line of communication at the district office for student, parent, and teacher issues.

Coordination is maintained with the Division of Learning so that the operation of the schools exists in a seamless way among all individuals.

SPECIALIZED SERVICES

Jerome Corbett, Senior Director

Specialized Services operates under the umbrella of School Based Operations. It is the responsibility of this department to conduct the following: all discipline hearings according to provisions of Polk County Schools' Student Code of Conduct; manage the contract with the private provider at the secondary alternative education facilities (Bill Duncan Opportunity Center and Don E. Woods Opportunity Center); and supervise the B.E.S.T. programs at Lakeland and Lake Alfred, Child Care Services department, Guidance Services department, HEARTH (Homeless Program) and the P.E.E.R. Center in Auburndale.

STUDENT SERVICES

Linda Troupe, Director

Student Services' personnel assist schools in meeting the academic, behavioral, health, and mental health needs of students and families. Assistance is provided via direct service/program delivery, staff training, program and policy development, implementation, and evaluation. Personnel and program services include:

School Psychologists – Assessment, counseling, crisis intervention, consultation, training, prevention, research/ program evaluation.

Social Workers – Home/school communication, connecting families to community resources, counseling, identifying social-developmental histories for students referred for psychological evaluation, truancy/attendance.

Guidance Counselors – Academic, career, personal/social counseling, consultation, training, prevention, Four-Year Plans, career, scholarship, financial aid information.

Juvenile Court Liaison – Notification and tracking of students involved in criminal behavior. Responsible for district's home education program, enforcement of compulsory attendance statutes, interagency collaboration.

School Nurses (RNs) – Responsible for Department of Health mandates including student emergency cards, high risk list, clinic audits, height/weight screening, scoliosis screening, school staff training on health topics, student care plans, entrance requirements, and immunizations.

Prevention Nurses (RNs) – Responsible for Human Growth and Development Curriculum (sex education) for students in grades 4-12. Provide training on health topics and OSHA compliance for the district.

LPNs & Clinic Paraprofessionals – Work under the supervision of RNs to maintain a clean and orderly school clinic, provide health care to students, maintain required documentation of health related activities, obtain vital signs and treatment as needed for students, dispense student medications.

Attendance Assistants – Address student nonattendance issues, conduct home visits, coordinate school-based attendance hearings, provide follow-up (e.g. monitor attendance, refer to outside agencies or court, etc.).

Prevention Specialists – Provide training in substance abuse and violence prevention education, group counseling including anger management, conflict resolution/ peer mediation training, elementary leadership program development and oversight. Responsible for Polk County's Prevention Survey administered to students in grades 6-12. Provide Life Skills training as requested.

Health Education – Responsible for the district's K-12 Health, Substance Abuse, and Violence Prevention Curriculum through curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation. Technical assistance, training, and resources are provided to all K-12 school personnel for curriculum implementation. Responsible for district's Character Education program.

Health Services – Responsible for the development, implementation, and evaluation of district's health policies and procedures for students; including training and clinical supervision for clinic paraprofessionals. Coordinate CPR and First Aid training.

Employee Wellness – Responsible for improving employees' and retirees' health through preventative screenings, education, high-risk intervention, and disease or condition management.

21st Century Community Learning Center – Provide grant-funded after-school and evening programs for eligible schools that have made application--activities focus on academic achievement, health and fitness, and family literacy with a strong community involvement component.

Personnel located at the Mark Wilcox Center

Other programs and services offered via Student Services include policy/procedure development and staff training in the following areas: bullying prevention; threat assessment; crisis intervention; Intervention Assistance Team; social skills; behavior management; student records; child abuse; and suicide prevention. Services provided include anger management

counseling, Crisis Team services, work waivers for students, student drug testing, substance abuse code of conduct program for students, missing children oversight, Home Education, Code of Student Conduct revisions, and Administrative Code of Conduct (guide for administrators entering student discipline data).

For more information visit the Student Services web site at www.polk-fl.net/student-services.

<p style="text-align: center;">SUPPORT SERVICES Fred Murphy, Assistant Superintendent</p>

Support Services is responsible for the transportation of 44,000 students to and from school on 514 established routes. School buses travel more than 41,000 miles daily providing service to approximately 54% of the students who attend Polk County District Schools.

In order to provide safe and efficient service to the district, the Assistant Superintendent of Support Services administers Bus Operations, Vehicle and Safety Services, Business and Inventory Control, Emergency and Disaster Preparedness, School Safety, Waste and Recycling Management, and Courier Services with 755 employees.

The Bus Operations department is responsible for safely transporting 44,000 students to and from school, utilizing 514 bus drivers and 162 bus attendants, which are coordinated by nine Area Managers. This department is also responsible for more than 6,500 field trips a year, route development, bus assignments, accounting for student funding, recruiting, hiring, and training new employees. Driver applicants must successfully complete 40 hours of classroom instruction and required driving skills. Safety, refresher, and first aid training (an annual requirement for bus drivers and attendants) is offered several times a year during in-service conferences.

Vehicle and Safety Services is responsible for the maintenance of school buses and other district-owned vehicles and equipment. School buses are inspected every 26 working days, and district vehicles receive scheduled preventative maintenance as well. The division has 61 vehicle and safety support employees and 6 supervisors who operate service centers in Bartow, Lake Wales, and Lakeland. There are eight fueling locations throughout the district as well. Safety Specialists evaluate bus stops and public complaints concerning safety, investigate all accidents involving district-owned vehicles, manage environmental concerns regarding transportation, and oversee a drug and alcohol testing program for the district's employees.

Business and Inventory Control is responsible for managing the Support Services Department budget with related accounting, auditing, and payroll functions.

Emergency and Disaster Preparedness provides a safe and orderly process for responding to natural and man made disasters or other unexpected emergencies such as hurricanes, floods, or chemical spills. School buses are used to transport residents when evacuation becomes necessary. Polk District is often a host county for evacuees from low-lying coastal areas. Several schools in the district serve as Red Cross shelters during these situations complete with food, water, and generators for emergency electrical power. This department is responsible for the implementation of the Jessica Lunsford Act, which requires the fingerprinting of all prospective employees and vendors.

Waste and Recycling Management monitors the district's waste and recycling processes and assists schools in developing recycling programs within their schools.

Courier Services provides pickup and delivery of School Board related information and materials to 230 plus locations, traveling in excess of 550 miles per day. The Courier Department is also responsible for receiving and distributing approximately 2,000 pieces of U.S. mail each working day for District Office personnel.

<p style="text-align: center;">WORKFORCE EDUCATION John Small, Senior Director</p>
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The Workforce Education Department consists of the following: two adult schools – East and West Area Adult Schools and two Career Centers – Ridge and Traviss Career Centers, workforce education programs, Career Education District and part-time Adult and Career Education Certification, Gause Academy of Leadership and Applied Technology, Farmworker Jobs and Education Program, General Educational Development (GED) testing and Teen Parent Program at the Dwight Smith Center and Ridge Career Center.

Adult Career Education – East and West Area Adult Schools are committed to providing programs for our community’s undereducated adults 16 years of age or older. GED testing is administered by the GED Testing area of the department. Traviss and Ridge Career Centers are post-secondary area workforce education institutions which provide Polk County with highly skilled employable workers and partner with local high schools to expand career training opportunities to students while earning their high school diploma.

Workforce Education Programs – Workforce Education Programs include Agriscience and Natural Resources Education, Business Education, Marketing Education, Family and Consumer Sciences Education, Industrial Education, Diversified Education, Public Service Education, and Technology Education. Workforce Education programs are offered throughout the district’s middle and high schools. These programs offer training to students to enable them to seek gainful employment opportunities in high skill, high wage occupations.

Farmworker Jobs and Education Program – This program provides job training, employment opportunities, and other services for those individuals who suffer chronic seasonal unemployment and underemployment in the agriculture industry. Emergency assistance in the form of food vouchers and assistance with rent, electric, and utility expense are a few of the services provided.

Vocational Workforce Education Certification – This office evaluates and processes applications for district career education certification. Information and assistance is provided in obtaining the required documentation for those seeking a career education district teaching certificate.

Alternative Education Academy - Gause Academy of Leadership and Applied Technology is an alternative education academy that provides a nurturing environment in which each student is given the opportunity to acquire the academic, social, leadership, and employability skills to become a productive member of society.

Career Education Centers – Traviss and Ridge Career Centers are local area technical centers that provide programs of study in a variety of career paths that meet the needs of local and regional Business and Industry.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK & BENEFITS INFORMATION

2007-2009

Section 3 Policies and Procedures

Arrests	Reassignments
Attendance/Promptness	Recycling/Energy Conservation
Certification	Resignations
Change of Address	Retirement
Conflict of Interest	Sick Leave Bank
Courier Mail	Smoke-Free Environment
Dress Code	Suspensions/Dismissals
Electronic Mail	Telephone Usage
Employee Assistance Program	Temporary Duty Leave
Evaluations	Toxic Substances at Work
Injury/Illness in the Line of Duty	Transfers
Leave of Absence	Unpaid Leave/Employee Benefits
Money Collection	Use of School Board Property
Network/Internet Policy	Vacancies/Promotion Procedures
Operation/School Board Vehicles	Volunteers
Personnel Records	Weapons/Firearms
	Workers' Compensation

ARRESTS

Any employee who is arrested or charged with any crime, including driving under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances, must notify his or her department director or principal of the alleged charges/allegations. Instructional personnel must self-report within 48 hours to appropriate authorities (determined by the district) any arrest/charges involving the abuse of a child or the sale and/or possession of a controlled substance. Failure to self-report may result in disciplinary action. Directors/Principals will immediately report such employee arrest information to the Director of Employee Relations, Human Resource Services.

ATTENDANCE AND PROMPTNESS

Because we serve the public, getting to work on time and being present every day is most important. The public expects and has a right to demand prompt and efficient service. If you must be absent, it is your responsibility to notify your principal or supervisor at once. This allows him/her to reassign your work and maintain a high standard of service. Excessive absenteeism may be grounds for disciplinary action or dismissal. We cannot operate as effectively when an employee is absent.

CERTIFICATION

The state Certification Office processes applications for initial certification, certain add-ons, and all other services for non-employees. The District Certification Office processes renewals, certain add-ons, name changes, and duplicate certificates for district employees. The district's multi-purpose form is on the Intranet in Public Folders under Human Resource Services, Forms. The state certification office approves all coursework for certification purposes. Teachers must call the toll free number 1-800-445-6739 with the following information: the name of the institution; the course prefix, number and title; and the certification requirement they are attempting to satisfy by completing the course. This line is extremely busy during registration periods, so be sure to plan ahead. Also, you can e-mail the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) at edcert@fldoe.org. Please include your name and social security number in your e-mail.

You may access the FLDOE website, <http://www.fldoe.org/edcert/>, for the following services: Certification Lookup, Application Status Lookup, and Request Materials. If you click on Application Status Lookup, you will be prompted to create a Login I.D. and Password. Once you are on this site, you will be able to access the following information about your certification file: the status/progress of your valid application and Statement of Status of Eligibility; a record of any valid Florida educator's certificate that you hold; and the official transcripts, score report and information received from the district within the last calendar year.

Teachers who hold three-year non-renewable temporary certificates must follow their Statement of Status of Eligibility. This document is an individualized listing of all the deficiencies that you must satisfy in order to be issued a Professional Certificate. State law requires that you submit a passing score on all sections of the General Knowledge exam within the first twelve months of employment. Passing scores earned on the CLAST prior to 7/1/02 are acceptable. If your Statement of Status of Eligibility reflects that you have specific testing requirements to meet, the district certification office has the registration bulletins and test information you need. For more information about the requirements listed on your Statement of Status of Eligibility, you may visit the FLDOE website: http://www.fldoe.org/edcert/cert_types.asp.

For reappointment purposes, all of the deficiencies outlined on your Statement of Status of Eligibility must be completed and documented with the district Certification office no later than April 1 of the year of expiration of your temporary certificate. As a courtesy to our teachers, the district certification office sends reminder notices to teachers on temporary certificates throughout the validity period of the certificate.

Teachers who hold five-year Professional certificates must renew their certificates every five years. During the validity period of this certificate, you are required to earn either 120 in-service points or six semester hours of

college credit. Information pertaining to renewal requirements is available on the FLDOE website: <http://www.fldoe.org/edcert/renew.asp>. The earliest that the district certification office will accept your application for renewal is July 1 of the year of expiration of your professional certificate.

As a courtesy to our teachers, the District Certification Office notifies teachers of expiring professional certificates and provides them with the application for renewal. Notification of expiring professional certificates is done in September of the year of expiration of the certificate.

If you are teaching out-of-field, proof of six semester hours in an authorized area or the equivalent of coursework earned must be submitted to the District Certification Office by your anniversary date each year.

When you earn a higher degree from an accredited institution, you must submit an official transcript with the higher degree conferred to the Certification Office in the Human Resource Services Division. A pay change can be effected as soon as official transcripts are received and processed, per the collective bargaining agreement, by the Human Resource Services Division.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

All changes in address or phone numbers should be reported in writing. A Change of Address Form can be acquired from your hiring location secretary or can be changed electronically. For information on how to change your address and phone number electronically, go to www.my.polk-fl.net. Name changes should be reflected on your Social Security Card, and a copy of your new card should be sent to your Personnel Assistant in the Human Resource Services Division.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Any School Board employee who also works for an organization doing business with the School Board must reveal such a contractual agreement, in writing, to the Superintendent. The Superintendent may approve such an arrangement; however, if the Superintendent determines the relationship to be a conflict of interest, he/she will request that the employee terminate his/her employment with either the organization or the School Board.

COURIER MAIL PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

Interdepartmental mail is delivered to school district related facilities via the courier service. The couriers handle both district and U.S. mail. It is important to note that the courier service provided by the district is intended for business related mail only, and employees should not use the courier to send mail or packages of a personal nature.

Please adhere to the following tips when using the courier service:

- Envelopes or packages should be clearly marked with the recipient's name, work location, and Courier Route designation along with the sender's name and work location. Packages or envelopes not clearly marked cannot be delivered.
- When mailing large numbers of letters via U.S. mail, the sender should contact the courier office to determine whether or not bulk-mailing rates are appropriate.
- When using overnight services (FedEx, UPS, or the U.S. Postal Service), please evaluate the necessity of using overnight air express. Sending a package or letter overnight air express to cities in Florida typically is not necessary and is very expensive. Letters and packages can be delivered via overnight ground transportation at a significantly lower cost.
- Packages in excess of 50 pounds cannot be delivered by the courier service.
- Couriers cannot wait at stops for mail to be processed. The outgoing mail must be in the designated location prior to the courier's arrival.

- Courier routes are published annually and are provided at the beginning of each school year. Routes can also be accessed via the Support Services homepage (<http://www.pcsb.k12.fl.us/transportation/>) under Helpful Documents.
- For additional information or assistance, call the Courier office at 534-0702 or 51500.

DRESS CODE

Our district has a strong emphasis on uniforms and dress codes for our students. All employees can help by modeling good choices through appropriate and professional attire. Neatness and cleanliness are also important. Teachers are role models for students. Each teacher shall maintain a neat, professional appearance appropriate for his/her specific teaching assignment. Uniform shirts will be provided and shall be worn by maintenance employees.

ELECTRONIC MAIL

Polk County School electronic mail (e-mail) accounts are granted to employees. Accounts shall be used to enhance communication for work-related duties. The use of e-mail accounts must be in support of education and/or research that are consistent with the educational goals and policies of the Polk County School Board. The employee in whose name the account is issued is responsible at all times for its proper use. Behavior that is inconsistent with this policy may result in disciplinary action, which may include possible termination, or legal action.

Policies:

- Unauthorized use includes, but is not limited to:
 - The creation and exchange of messages that are offensive, harassing, obscene, or threatening.
 - The creation and exchange of messages that use impolite, abusive, or objectionable language.
 - The exchange of privileged, confidential, or sensitive information outside of the organization or outside the defined privileged group.
 - The creation and exchange of advertisements, solicitations, chain letters, SPAM, and other unsolicited E-mail.
 - The creation, storage, or exchange of information in violation of copyright laws.
 - Reading or sending messages from another user's account, except under proper delegated arrangements.
 - Altering or copying a message or attachment belonging to another user without the permission of the originator.
 - The installation and use of Hotbars application and similar third party email enhancements are prohibited.
 - Stationery must be limited to what is currently available in Microsoft Outlook.
 - Using email in ways that violate School Board policies or district procedures.
 - Activities which cause congestion of the network or otherwise interfere with the work of others.
 - Representing personal views as those of the District School Board of Polk County.
- The principal/supervisor must be notified immediately of any unauthorized use of your account or any other breach of security. Polk County Schools is not liable for any loss you may incur as a result of someone else using your password or account, either with or without your knowledge.
- Users must not compromise the privacy of their password by giving it to others or exposing it to public services. Passwords must be at least 7 characters in length and should be changed at least every 90 days.
- Personal Folders must be established on the user's workstation for the storage of correspondence and materials.
- Automatic forwarding of any email from inside Polk County Schools to an outside network is prohibited.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

As a benefit to all employees and their dependents, the School Board provides free, confidential counseling on all aspects of life through The Allen Group (TAG). TAG allows employees and members of their immediate family the opportunity to visit licensed counselors who are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Professional therapists are on hand to help members cope with life events that can challenge their ability to balance work and family responsibilities. TAG services are at no cost to the employee or their family members. TAG assistance is available for emotional issues, marital problems, interpersonal conflict, work-related issues, stress and burnout, grief and loss, substance abuse, eating disorders, debt management, and legal issues. Please visit www.theallengroup.com for a complete listing of services and newsletters. To schedule a confidential counseling appointment, please contact 800-272-7252. If you have questions, contact the Employee Relations Department.

EVALUATIONS

The School Board expects high performance of all its employees. Evaluations help employees identify their strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities for professional growth and development.

Classroom Teacher Evaluation

In accordance with state law, our district, through the Professional Development Department, has a system for assessing the performance of teachers and other instructional personnel who are covered by a collective bargaining agreement.

All instructional personnel receive a copy of the “Quality Performance Handbook-Teachers” or the “Quality Performance Handbook-Media/Guidance,” which includes:

- Quality Performance Summary Assessment (QPSA)
- Quality Performance Observation Instrument (QPOI)
- Quality Performance Plan (QPP)
- Individual Professional Growth Plan (IPGP)
- Quality Performance Summary Assessment-Media (QPSA-M)
- Quality Performance Summary Assessment-Guidance (QPSA-G)
- Professional Development Plan (PDP)

Your administrator/evaluator will provide an orientation on the assessment forms and procedures and will answer questions. The evaluator may be a principal, assistant principal, or other immediate supervisor. If you work at a school, you may ask the principal to conduct your observation.

Non-instructional Personnel Evaluation

All non-instructional personnel in the school district will have access via Outlook>Public Folders>All Public Folders>Professional Development to a copy of the Non-Instructional Personnel Evaluation Handbook, which includes the evaluation forms and procedures for conducting the evaluation. Performance of non-instructional personnel will be judged by the employee’s daily work. A performance review conference, based on the routine observation of an employee’s work, will be made by the supervisor once a year. If you have questions about the evaluation process, discuss them with your supervisor or the Director of Professional Development.

INJURY AND ILLNESS IN THE LINE OF DUTY

Leave for Injury/Illness in the Line of Duty is granted for up to 10 days per year when an employee (eligible for benefits) is absent because of personal injury that occurred while working or because of illness from a contagious or infectious disease contracted while working. Contagious or infectious disease refers to those normally related to children, such as measles, chicken pox, mumps, etc.

In order to be eligible for this protection, the injury must be reported to the Workers' Compensation carrier. Treatment must be provided by an approved Workers' Compensation doctor. Whenever possible, doctor appointments are expected to be coordinated between the employee, Workers' Compensation Carrier, and the doctor's office to be the least disruptive to the normal working day

The Illness/Injury in the Line of Duty form should be filed within the time limits described in the employee's collective bargaining agreement or within 24 hours for non-bargaining employees. The employee must provide documentation from the Workers' Compensation doctor in order for time to be approved. Contact the Risk Management Department for additional information.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Unless otherwise specified by law, leave is granted at the discretion of the School Board. Policies about leave are designed to protect school operation from unnecessary interruption due to absences. When employees apply for leave, they must complete the appropriate form and include the reason for requesting the leave in writing. The School Board may cancel the leave if it is used for a different purpose or cause. Leave is generally granted in advance, not retroactively. However, emergencies that cannot be anticipated are considered "granted" in advance if they are promptly reported. Except for military leave, leave cannot be granted beyond July 1 of the next fiscal year. However, a new application may be filed at the expiration of leave, with new leave granted at the discretion of the School Board. The person on leave is responsible for requesting a renewal; it is not automatic. If a renewal is not requested, employment will be terminated.

Types of Leave

- Professional
- Charter School
- Military
- Jury Duty
- Family Medical Leave
- Medical Leave
- Illness-in-the-Line-of-Duty
- Temporary Duty Assignment

Vacation

Vacation policy for 12-month employees with continuous creditable years of service is:

- 0-5 years: 13 days per year
- 6-10 years: 16 ¹/₄ days per year
- More than 10 years: 19 ¹/₂ days per year

The number of years credited for vacation must have been spent in Polk County. Only years when the employee was on a 10-month basis or longer will be used. Any service break of more than three days without leave will break continuity, and the employee must start at zero years if re-employed.

Employees cannot carry more than 40 days vacation to the next calendar year.

Vacation time must be approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee and should be planned so that normal operation of the school or department is not affected. Payment for vacation shall be at the employee's current daily rate of pay. The number of sick and vacation days an individual has accrued is listed on each paycheck stub and is converted into hours according to the number of hours worked per day.

For additional information on Leave of Absence requirements and procedures, please refer to the Payroll Information Section of this handbook. Detailed information regarding leave policy can be found in your respective Bargaining Agreement. Copies are available at your hiring location or on the Polk County School Board website at www.polk-fl.net.

MONEY COLLECTION

All money collected from any source must be recorded on a *Report of Monies Collected* Form. This form serves as a record of students' payments for fees, textbooks, yearbooks, rentals, etc. The form eliminates the need for individual receipts to students. If a student or his/her parent insists upon a receipt, the student should be sent to the *finance secretary* to make the payment. All *Report of Monies Collected* forms are processed in triplicate. Do not separate the form. Each form is numbered, and the school is held accountable for each form. If it becomes necessary to void a *Report of Monies Collected* form, write void on it and return it to the finance secretary. The *Report of Monies Collected* form should be filled out, signed, dated, and turned in to the finance secretary with the money collected. The financial secretary should also sign and date the *Report of Monies Collected* form and return it to you with an Official Receipt attached. Your copy of the *Report of Monies Collected* form and Official Receipt should be kept in a safe place. Everyone is subject to audit by the Internal Auditor for the District Office.

All checks are to be made payable to the school. Please put the student's name on the check if it is different from the pre-printed information. Please put the account number the money is to be deposited into on the check.

All money collected should be turned in to the office daily with the *Report of Monies Collected* form as described above. Follow these procedures to avoid possible suspension and/or termination of employment.

NETWORK USE AND INTERNET ACCESS POLICY

The Polk County School District offers access to network resources and the Internet. Usage is a privilege granted to employees and students. The use of the network and the Internet must be in support of educational and professional activities that are consistent with the educational goals and policies of the Polk County School Board. The user is responsible at all times for its proper use. Behavior that is inconsistent with these policies and guidelines may result in disciplinary action and/or legal action.

General Network Use

The network includes all computers and other peripheral devices on school district property that are interconnected to the local/wide area network. It is provided for users to conduct research, complete assignments, print assignments, use instructional programs, and use media center electronic catalog.

Internet Access

The Internet ("World Wide Web") encompasses a multitude of libraries, databases and resources beyond the school district's local/wide area network. It is provided for users to access educational resources to conduct research, complete assignments, use instructional programs, and use media center on-line catalogs.

General Network Use and Internet Access Policies

Unauthorized use includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Violations of laws and regulations regarding:
 - Copyrighted and trademark material,
 - Threatening, obscene or profane material,
 - Licensing agreements,
 - Plagiarism.
- Vandalism, which is defined as malicious attempt to harm or destroy network resources, data of another user, the Internet or other networks. This includes the creation of, or uploading of, computer viruses on the Internet or host site.
- Use of the Internet or network for financial gain or illegal activity.
- Use of another individual's network access, including use of another individual's network username and password.
- Congestion of network by consuming large amounts of bandwidth, including but not limited to

Network/Internet games,
Streaming video and audio,
Teleconferencing,
Downloading very large files without prior approval of technology staff.

- Hacking or any attempt to gain access to networks
Browsing networks to obtain IP addresses and other network information
Accessing the networks without prior authorization
Use network resources or other resources with the intent of preventing or interfering with the transmission of voice, data, pictures, or anything that can be transmitted over the network.
Trespass on other's work, files or folders, and attempt to, or take action to, access, modify, harm or destroy data of another user.
- Circumventing proxy servers, firewalls or other filtering software.
- Using unauthorized telephone services, including long distance calls.
- The Product Integration and Evaluation (PIE) committee must approve all Internet/network based curriculum or resources prior to purchase and/or installation.

OPERATION OF SCHOOL BOARD VEHICLES

Some employees, as part of their duties, are assigned county vehicles. These vehicles are to be used for school board business only. Safety belts must be worn at all times in county vehicles that are equipped with them. Any employee who is assigned a county vehicle and acquires excessive at-fault traffic citations is subject to disciplinary action and may have his/her driving privileges canceled. This could cause termination of employment.

PERSONNEL RECORDS

Personnel/employment records are processed and maintained in the Human Resource Services Division. All personnel files are public records and as such are available for public inspection. If you would like to review your personnel file, please contact the Human Resource Services Division for an appointment.

The School Board automatically exempts some confidential and sensitive personal information, such as social security numbers and medical information, from your personnel file before public disclosure in accordance with the Public Records Law. An agency that is the custodian of the personal information specified shall maintain the exempt status of the personal information only if the officer, employee, justice, judge, or other person, or employing agency of the designated employee, submits a written request for maintenance of the exemption to the custodial agency. If you are a current School Board employee who is either an active or former employee in one of the above categories, and/or you are the spouse or a child of an active or former employee, you may exercise your right of exemption from certain Public Records laws. If you elect to exempt your address and telephone number from all School Board public lists, please fill out the Personnel File Request for Exemption form and return it to your Principal/Supervisor for submission to the Human Resource Services Division. For more information about this written exemption or to see if you qualify, please refer to Florida Statute 119.071. If you qualify, you will need to complete in writing the Personnel File Request for Exemption Form; it is maintained in the Outlook>Public Folders>All Public Folders>Human Resource Services>Forms>Misc. If you need additional assistance, please contact your supervisor or Human Resource Services.

The Human Resource Services Division should be notified in writing of any changes in personal status such as changes in name, address or marital status. Please notify the Risk Management Department regarding any changes in beneficiary for life insurance purposes and/or changes in the number of dependents.

REASSIGNMENTS

In the event that the administration determines that an involuntary transfer to another school or hiring location must occur, the employee shall be notified of the decision in writing. For more detailed information, please refer to your respective Collective Bargaining Agreement.

RECYCLING AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

Our employees are committed to conserving energy and recycling as many products as possible. Please do your part by using special containers for waste paper, aluminum cans, and other recyclable materials. Turn off lights and equipment when you are away from your work area to help us conserve. For more information about the district's recycling efforts, call the Recycling Specialist at 534-5052. For more information about the Energy Education Program, call 534-0586.

RESIGNATIONS

When an employee leaves a position, proper notice should be given. A letter of resignation indicating the date you plan to leave and the reasons should be submitted to your supervisor. Please give at least two weeks notice to ensure you leave in good standing. It is important that you leave the district in good standing to protect your eligibility for rehiring. If you are absent from work without permission from your supervisor, this may be considered as your having resigned and could result in the forfeiting of all rights to reemployment. You will need to submit to your supervisor a letter of resignation and complete an exit interview. For more information, contact your assigned Personnel Assistant.

RETIREMENT

The Florida Retirement System (FRS) is an employee-noncontributory system. This means that your employer, Polk County Public Schools, makes the total contribution for you. No money is deducted from your salary to pay for your retirement. The employer contributions are not refundable. The FRS has been employee-noncontributory since January 1, 1975. Social Security contributions are automatically deducted from your salary and matched by the School Board on your behalf.

The Florida Retirement System now makes available two retirement plans, the Defined Benefit Plan and the Investment Plan. Under the **Defined Benefit Plan**, you are vested after you have completed six (6) years of creditable service. Vesting refers to your earned right to receive a retirement benefit when you reach normal or early retirement age, even though you may have terminated before that age. Normal retirement is 62 years of age OR 30 years of service regardless of age. If you have at least six years of creditable service but have not reached your normal retirement age as described above, you can take early retirement. The amount of your benefit is reduced 5% for each year you are under age 62.

Under the **Investment Plan**, you are vested after you have completed one (1) year of creditable service. This benefit is based on return of investments or progress. It is more portable and is better for employees who are short term.

If you are preparing to retire, certain steps should be taken to ensure that there would be no loss of benefits to you. The following is a description of steps you may wish to follow:

PLAN AHEAD

Decide when you intend to retire. To be eligible for benefits, you must terminate all relationships with ALL FRS employers and not be reemployed by any FRS employer within the next calendar year following your initial retirement. There are exceptions to the reemployment law for retirees reemployed in certain positions with educational institutions. For example, instructional personnel may work in a regular or substitute position as a

teacher, food service worker, bus driver, bus attendant or paraeducator after 30 days and draw their retirement benefit and salary.

REQUEST AN ESTIMATE

Within two years of your proposed termination date, you are encouraged to request an audit of your years of service, and you may request an estimate of benefits by obtaining Form FR 9 from the Human Resource Services Department. The Division of Retirement will send you the estimate of benefits. It will show the estimated retirement benefits to which you are entitled.

APPLY FOR RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Three to six months before your termination date, request a retirement application from the District Retirement Specialist in the Human Resource Services Department. Questions regarding retirement options should be forwarded to the Retirement Specialist.

HEALTH INSURANCE AND LIFE INSURANCE

You may elect to retain the benefits that you are enrolled in at the time of retirement. You may decrease benefits at retirement, but you may not increase them.

DEFERRED RETIREMENT OPTION PROGRAM (DROP)

The Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) is a program, which became effective July 1, 1998, and allows you to retire and begin accumulating your retirement benefits without terminating employment for up to 60 months from the date you first reach normal retirement (age 62 or 30 years of service). While participating in DROP, your monthly retirement benefits remain in the FRS Trust Fund, earning tax-deferred interest, while you continue to work (but you do not earn additional service credit for retirement). When the DROP period ends, you must terminate all employment with FRS employers. At that time, you will receive payment of the accumulated DROP benefits and begin receiving your monthly retirement benefit (in the same amount as determined at retirement, plus annual cost-of-living increases).

For additional information, contact the Retirement Analyst, Human Resource Services Division.

SICK LEAVE BANK

Any full time employee, having been employed by the PCSB at least one (1) year and having at least fifteen (15) days accrued sick leave, may enroll in the Sick Leave Bank by contributing one (1) sick leave day to the sick leave bank between July 1 and October 1 of any school year. A full-time employee is a person employed for five days a week in an established position.

An employee contributes one sick day one time for initial membership. If the balance of days in the bank falls below 25% of the total membership, all participating members will be asked to donate one additional day to maintain their membership. Members of the bank who become unable to work for an extended period of time may withdraw days from the bank. Some restrictions do apply and potential bank members will get additional information during the open enrollment period each fall.

For additional information, contact the Employee Relations Department.

SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT

All school system buildings became smoke-free after June 30, 1991. Smoking will be permitted only in the designated smoking areas outside of the school building. Employees at each school site will be responsible for providing the designated smoking area at no expense to the School Board. Excepting Ridge and Traviss Career Centers and the adult and community schools, the designated smoking area will not be within view of students, and smokers should refrain from smoking in the presence of students while on duty. Compliance is expected and required. Violations of this policy will result in appropriate action being taken, the same as a violation of any other School Board policy. The School Board will provide assistance to any employee who wishes to quit smoking, including participation in smoking cessation programs and/or workshops.

SUSPENSIONS/DISMISSALS

Under certain conditions, a supervisor may recommend to the Superintendent the suspension or dismissal of an employee. Administrative Leave for immediate suspension or dismissal are outlined in detail in your respective Collective Bargaining Agreement and School Board Policy, Chapter 3.

TELEPHONE USAGE

While occasional personal telephone calls may be made during work hours, such calls should not interfere with performance of job responsibilities, emergencies excepted. Preferably, such calls should be made during planning time, break time, before and after the official workday, or during lunch. Employees should remember that the district telephone system, including long distance telephone calls, and the various school telephone systems, is not to be used for personal long distance telephone calls, unless the calls are billed to a personal credit card or a personal telephone number. Employees are reminded that long distance calls are to be logged.

TEMPORARY DUTY LEAVE

Temporary duty leave is authorized for all Employees who are assigned by the Superintendent to be on duty at such a place or places removed from their regular place of duty. The Superintendent is authorized under these policies to reassign Employees to temporary duty as deemed necessary and to execute payment for reimbursement of expenses. Temporary Duty Assignment (TDA) requests should be submitted to the Director of Personnel in Human Resource Services at least 4 weeks prior to the date of the leave in order to obtain prior approval. With proper prior approval from an employee's supervisor, overnight stays are permitted for out of county travel (including Tampa and Orlando) and will be reimbursed according to policy. For example, Principals and Senior Directors may approve overnight stays for school based staff and Associate/Assistant Superintendents/Superintendent may approve overnight stays for district staff.

TOXIC SUBSTANCES AT WORK

Employees have a right to know about exposures to toxic substances in the workplace. Under the Florida Right-to-Know Law, Chapter 442, Florida Statutes, employers must provide employees with information about the toxic substances with which they work and train employees in safe handling practices and emergency procedures. A list of toxic substances is listed at each school or hiring location. For more information about toxic substances in the work place, contact Environmental Services at 519-8511.

TRANSFERS

Employees may request transfers based on advertised vacancies. Employees who wish to transfer to a different work site during the school session shall submit a transfer request to their immediate supervisor for the specific vacancy being advertised. For a list of vacancies, access the PCSB website. For information regarding existing employee transfers, refer to your Collective Bargaining Agreement or School Board Policy.

UNPAID LEAVE AND EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

If you go on official unpaid leave, you are entitled to any and all of your benefits. However, for as long as you are on leave, to the extent permitted by law, the Board does not contribute to your health or life insurance coverage. You will be responsible for payroll deductions that you would have paid if you were still on active status, plus the amount the Board would have contributed. If you fail to pay your premium, the Risk Management Office may cancel the coverage. Employees on leave are entitled to the same annual enrollment that active employees have.

USE OF SCHOOL BOARD PROPERTY

The School Board provides you with necessary equipment, materials, and vehicles to carry out the job assigned to you. If you are assigned any equipment, it becomes your responsibility to exercise care in its operation. Personal use of vehicles, materials, supplies, tools, or other equipment is not permitted. Violation could result in disciplinary action up to dismissal, criminal prosecution, or both.

VACANCIES/PROMOTION PROCEDURES

The Human Resource Services Division maintains the website to provide employees with knowledge of all vacancies. Information is updated on a daily basis. The vacancy notice remains on the website for a minimum of five (5) days. An employee seeking a new position within the system is encouraged to access the website on a consistent basis. Current employees are given priority consideration for all promotion opportunities and will not be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, marital status, age, religion, or any other basis prohibited by law.

VOLUNTEERS

The Polk County School Board encourages the use of community volunteers to accomplish our goals. Staff members must provide adequate supervision, space and materials for volunteers. Volunteers must complete the online application at <https://pds.polk-fl.net/ssl/VolApp/default.asp> before serving. Volunteers are required to sign in at their site of service, wear appropriate identification while on site, and be a positive role model in manner, dress and appearance.

When working with students, volunteers may NOT:

- Handle confidential information about students
- Be placed in charge of a classroom of students in the absence of a teacher
- Discipline students
- Give medication to students.

Volunteer privileges can be revoked if school board policies are violated. Any concerns should be reported to your immediate supervisor or to the Community Involvement Office at (863) 534-0636.

Release Time for Polk County School Board Employees:

If you are an instructional employee, you may complete the School Board Release time form found at <http://dev.polk-fl.net/communityrelations>, to tutor or mentor students at your school of employment before or after school, during lunch, or planning time. Your hours can be counted as volunteer hours for your school. Teachers who require in-service points for recertification can receive 30 in-service points each semester when they mentor or tutor.

If you are a district employee, you may volunteer at the school of your choice one-hour per week with your supervisor's permission. Fill out the district office release time form found at http://dev.polk-fl.net/communityrelations/release_form.doc and courier to the Community Involvement Office, Route E.

If you are a parent of a Polk County student, you are able to volunteer at your child's school by simply filling out the online application found at <https://pds.polk-fl.net/ssl/VolApp/default.asp>.

The staff at the Community Involvement Office will answer your questions through e-mail at Margaret.Wheeler@polk-fl.net or by calling (863) 534-0636.

WEAPONS/FIREARMS

It is the expressed policy of the Polk County School Board that no weapons/firearms shall be taken upon school property by any one other than law enforcement personnel. All persons, including school personnel, violating the provisions of this policy, while on School Board property or while attending school activities, wherever located, shall be immediately reported to the proper law enforcement authority. Employees violating the above provisions shall also be reported to the School Board and to the Professional Practice Commission. The Superintendent shall report any Employee violation of the provisions hereof to the School board and shall also include a recommendation for disciplinary action, which may include suspension or dismissal. Authorized school programs requiring the usage of firearms shall be exceptions.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

If you are injured on the job, the Florida Workers' Compensation Law protects you. If you are hurt on the job, regardless of how slight an injury, report it to your supervisor or principal. You may think the injury insignificant at the time, but it could develop into something that requires medical care, and a report should be on file for you to receive treatment.

This benefit is provided by state statute, and there are rules and procedures both you, as the employee, and your employer must follow. Further, there are stiff penalties for fraud.

The School Board provides safety equipment that must be used when engaging in certain activities. Be sure to use this protection because you could be penalized if you are injured while not doing so. A good example is a car seat belt. Using it not only protects you against injury but also protects your rights under Workers' Compensation and your ability to recover from the responsible party.

As stated in the Polk County School Board Policies Chapter Three, Section 3.003, District Rules and Regulations: drug testing will be conducted for all on the job injuries.

****Please refer to the appropriate Collective Bargaining Agreement or School Board Policy for an in depth discussion of the items summarized in this section.****

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK & BENEFITS INFORMATION

2007-2009

Section 4
Payroll Services

Payroll Information
Additional Work
Holdback
Termination-Pay-up of Holdback/Unused Leave
New Hires First Paycheck
Sick/Vacation Leave
Payroll Deductions
Understanding Your Paycheck

PAYROLL INFORMATION

School district employees are paid on the last work day of each month. Paychecks are usually distributed by a principal or supervisor at your main work location. The Payroll Calendar in each work location shows holidays and scheduled pay dates.

In compliance with federal labor laws, employees must accurately record daily work hours on the appropriate time log. Falsification of these payroll records is grounds for termination.

Paychecks for regular employees are subject to mandatory payroll deductions for social security tax, Medicare tax and federal withholding tax, based on Forms W-4 and the tax tables furnished by the Internal Revenue Service.

Payroll deduction is available for School Board sponsored items such as medical, dental and life insurance, and MIDFLORIDA Federal Credit Union. Additional payroll deductions are permitted for items such as cancer insurance, salary continuation (disability) insurance, union dues, tax sheltered annuities, the YMCA, and Series EE U.S. Savings Bonds.

Employees may have their net pay deposited directly into any banking institution. Employees who choose this option will get a direct deposit slip showing gross pay and applicable deductions.

School Board employees with at least one full year of service will be partially reimbursed for their unused sick leave when their employment ends. For more information, contact the Payroll Department.

Work Hours

Because of the diversity of the school system, an employee's work hours will be determined by the supervisor. Be sure to discuss this with your supervisor before you begin work.

Breaks*

Breaks during the normal work day are permitted by supervisors. Normally, there is one break in the morning and one in the afternoon.

Breaks are not to exceed 15 minutes each. The hours and times for breaks are left to the discretion of the principal or supervisor. Employees' lunch periods are scheduled so that there is always someone in the office to assist the public. The exact time you take your lunch break will be determined by your supervisor.

** This does not apply to administrative or instructional personnel.*

ADDITIONAL WORK

Will I be paid for additional work and overtime?

It depends on whether or not the additional work is related to your regular job function and whether you have your supervisor's approval prior to working any additional hours. It also depends on whether or not you receive additional compensation and on whether or not you are classified as "Overtime Exempt" or "Overtime Non-Exempt" under Wage and Hour Law. If you are Non-Exempt, you will receive additional compensation; if you are Exempt, you **will not** receive additional compensation. If you are unsure of your classification, contact the Human Resource Services department.

Some Non-Exempt Positions

Secretaries
Paraprofessionals
Foodservice Assistants
Custodians
Clerical Staff
Maintenance
Bus Drivers & Attendants

Some Exempt Positions

Principals
Assistant Principals
Teachers
Guidance Counselors
District Office Professionals
District Office Administrators
Foodservice Managers

If you are Non-Exempt, you must have prior approval of your immediate supervisor before you actually work outside of your normal planned working time.

If the additional work is outside of the realm of your regular job, and you have received proper approvals in advance, you will be compensated for the work at the rate of pay associated with the job you are performing. In this instance, it makes no difference whether you are classified as Overtime Exempt or Non-Exempt; you will be compensated. As an example, a teacher may work at night teaching at the Adult School and be compensated at a set hourly rate different from her normal hourly rate assigned to her daytime job.

How will I be paid for my additional work?

An employee's normal daily working hours on scheduled workdays is referred to as Planned Working Time. Employees who fall under the Overtime Non-Exempt category (employees who are covered by Wage and Hour Law) will be compensated for time worked outside of their planned working time. Hours worked at the employee's regular job and outside of Planned Working Time will be paid as **Additional Time** at the employee's regular hourly rate of pay. Hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a work week, including all work within the school board, will be paid as **Overtime .5x**, at one and one-half the employee's regular hourly rate of pay. (The school board work week begins Saturday at 12:00AM (midnight) and ends Friday at 11:59 PM.) For example, a secretary works 42 hours and is scheduled to work 37.5 hours. She will receive additional compensation equal to 4.5 hours (Additional Time) at her straight time hourly rate, plus 2.0 hours (Overtime .5x) at one-half her hourly rate.

Hours worked at a job, which is not related to the employee's regular job, will be compensated at a special hourly rate of pay. The extra pay on the paycheck will be shown under the category of the work performed. As the example of the teacher who teaches adult school at night, the payment for the adult school work will show as **Adult School** on her paycheck. Another example would be when an employee attends a required in-service training class outside of normal hours. The

employee is compensated at a special rate of pay, and it shows as **In-Service Training** on the paycheck.

When will I be paid for my additional work?

You should expect to receive payment for some of your additional work in the pay period following the period you performed the work. As an example, if you worked additional time from February 20 to February 28, you will receive payment for that additional time in your March paycheck. Time entry to the payroll system must cut off around the 20th of the month, and additional work cannot be recorded in advance of when you worked. Time entry cut offs vary from month to month; therefore, this is only an example.

What about compensatory time?

If it is agreed upon between the employee and his/her immediate supervisor, then the employee may earn compensatory time in lieu of being paid for additional time and overtime. In terms of which employees are eligible to receive compensatory time, the same rules apply here that apply to additional time and overtime. Only employees classified as non-exempt may earn compensatory time except under special situations approved by the superintendent.

The rate at which compensatory time is earned depends on the total hours worked in the workweek and the number of hours recorded as compensatory time. For example, a secretary works 42 hours and is scheduled to work 37.5 hours. If the additional 4.5 hours are recorded as compensatory time, then she will only be paid her normal wages based on the 37.5 hours. The system will credit her with 5.5 hours of compensatory time broken down as follows: Compensatory time worked over the normal 37.5 hours but less than the 40 hours, equals 2.5 hours earned at straight time; compensatory time worked over the 40 hours equals 2 hours earned at the rate of 1.5 equals 3.0 hours; for a total of 5.5 hours of compensatory time that will be added on the paycheck and will be available to be used as a paid absence in the future.

HOLDBACK (does not apply to 12-month employees)

What is holdback?

Employees who work less than twelve (12) months will have holdback. Holdback is calculated for Bus Drivers and Bus Attendants the same as the other groups of employees.

For Non-Bus Driver/Bus Attendants, the overall intent is to give employees as close to twelve equal payments as possible. The paycheck is designed to give employees useful information about how they are paid, including the amount earned for the pay period, the amount of “holdback” deducted or added for the period, and the holdback balance-to-date.

For most pay periods, employees will earn more than they will be paid. The difference between what is earned and what is paid is referred to as “holdback” and will be shown as a negative amount in the earnings section of the paycheck. When holdback is deducted from earnings, it is added to the “holdback balance” shown just under the “total earnings” amount on the paycheck. The holdback balance accumulates throughout the school year so that it can be drawn upon in months such as December (where employees will earn less than what should be paid) and June and July (where some employees are not working and earn nothing). When the holdback balance is drawn upon, the amount of holdback in the earnings section of the paycheck will be shown as a positive amount, and the holdback balance will be reduced. Any holdback balance remaining at the end of June will be paid out at the end of July so that the holdback balance is reduced to zero.

The amount of holdback for each pay period (a pay period is generally a calendar month) is determined by the employee's work schedule and hourly rate of pay. The payroll system will attempt to pay an amount equal of the employee's annual salary divided by twelve (the monthly salary). The difference between what is earned and what is paid is either added or subtracted from the holdback balance. The holdback balance cannot become negative.

For Bus Drivers and Bus Attendants, Holdback will be taken and stored for use during the summer and other payroll periods with a small number of working days. Holdback will be calculated only on Assigned Route Time and Paid Leave. Any other earnings will be paid as according to the payroll period in which they are earned. Assigned Route Time may vary between individual employees and is subject to change at any given time. The average daily working hours for each payroll period will be automatically determined for each individual employee to be used in the Holdback calculation.

What if I have any unpaid absences? How will they affect my holdback?

Unpaid absences are deducted after the holdback calculation. In other words, unpaid absences do not reduce the holdback amount deducted. For example, if an employee uses Personal Leave Without Pay to cover two days' absence in August, the amount of holdback deducted, added to the holdback balance in August, is the same as if the absences did not occur. The employee in this example can expect to take the full hit of the absences without pay in August, and there will be no effect on paychecks the following summer.

What about additional work with the school board, like working adult school at night?

Supplemental payments and payments for additional work are not included in the holdback calculation. Examples are teaching supplements, coaches' supplements, teaching extra class period, teaching adult school, and in-service training. Employees should expect to receive the full benefit of these payments when they are earned and recorded into the system. Employees covered by wage and hour law (overtime non-exempt employees) can expect to receive full payment for Additional Time and Overtime Premium when it is earned.

What if my employment in a position did not begin until after the first day of the school year?

Employees who start work late in the school year will have his/her salary prorated and will receive an equal monthly pay check beginning with the month following the start of employment through the end of July. In the first month of employment, the employee official start date will determine if his/her first pay check will be either the same equal monthly checks for the remainder of the school year or will be limited to the actual number of days worked in the month. If the employee's first pay check is the actual number of days worked, it is because the employee did not work enough days in the month to receive an equal pay check.

What if I have a change in my salary or a change in my work schedule?

Employees who receive a change in rate of pay or work schedules in mid-year should expect that their summer checks will not be equal to the new monthly salary. In situations where the employee receives an increase in hourly pay or increase in hours worked per day during the year, the July check should be less than the new monthly salary. If the reverse is true and the employee takes a reduction in hourly pay or reduced hours worked per day during the year, the July check should be more than the new monthly salary. Again, pay attention to your "holdback balance" on your paychecks.

What if I normally start to work in July each year?

If you start to work in July before the August payroll period, you will be paid in July for days you work in July. Non 12-month employees who work in the July payroll period will usually receive two checks in July, one to pay up the balance of holdback from the preceding school year and another to pay for days worked in July of the current school year. Because the start date in July can change from year to year, the total amount you receive in July may vary from one year to the next.

TERMINATION – PAY-UP OF HOLDBACK AND UNUSED LEAVE

When I terminate my employment with the school board, when may I expect to receive payment for unused sick leave, vacation leave, and holdback?

Employees other than Bus Drivers and Bus Attendants

1) Termination prior to the completion of your school year

If your last day of employment in your regular position is the 15th of the month or before, you should expect to receive payment on the normal pay date for the month you terminate. If your last day of employment is after the 15th of the month, you should not expect to receive payment until the normal pay date of the following month. For example, if your last active day as a regular employee of the school board is January 15, you should receive payment for holdback and unused sick leave on January 31. If your last active day as a regular employee is January 16, you should not expect to receive payment until February 28. If a situation occurs which prevents you from being paid on the dates set forth above, you will be paid on a special payroll run on the closest normal business day to the 10th of the month following your month of termination. For example, your last active day is January 15, but the proper paper work fails to reach the Human Resource Services department in time to meet the payroll cut off. In this case, you would be paid on February 10 or the closest business day to the 10th.

2) Termination at the end of your school year.

If you remain employed in your regular position through the last scheduled workday of the school year, your effective date of termination will be June 30th. (This will entitle you to board insurance coverage through the month of August). If you have a holdback balance at the end of May, it will be paid to you in the months of June and July, and insurance deductions should come out of each of those checks.

Bus Drivers and Bus Attendants

Bus Drivers and Bus Attendants will be paid for unused leave and any Holdback balance according to the normal payroll period for which they terminated if their paperwork is processed in a timely manner. In other words, if a Bus Driver resigns on May 23, any unused sick leave and Holdback will be paid on June 30 because the payroll period of May 15 to June 15 is designated to have a June 30 pay date. If a situation occurs which prevents a Bus Driver and Bus Attendant from being paid on the dates set forth above, they will be paid on a special payroll run on the closest normal business day to the 10th of the month following the normal date of payment. In the situation above, the day that you would be paid would be around July 10th.

How will I be paid for my sick leave when my employment is terminated?

Depending on your length of service, you will be paid for up to 50% of the hours of sick leave you have accumulated on the date of your termination. If you do not complete your first year of employment, you will receive no payment for sick leave. If you complete one (1) year of employment but fewer than nine (9) years, you will receive between 35% and 45% of the hours accumulated according to guidelines provided in board policy. If you complete nine (9) or more years of service, you will receive 50% of the hours accumulated. Employees classified as administrators will be paid out at a rate not greater than 25% of hours accumulated, not to exceed a total payment of 480 hours.

If your employment is terminated prior to the end of the school year, your sick leave balance will be adjusted to the amount you actually earned; whereas, the balance shown on your paycheck represents the amount you have been credited. Even though you get credited with 4 days (5 days if you are a teacher) in the first month, you only earn one day per month of employment.

What if I go on Leave-of-Absence, will I be paid for holdback and unused leave?

You will not be paid for unused sick leave or vacation leave; however, you may be paid for holdback if you request it. If you are paid for holdback upon going on leave of absence, you will not receive full checks the following summer, even if you return to work during the school year. If you elect not to receive your holdback upon going on leave of absence, you will receive the holdback the following summer (June and/or July) regardless of your returning to work during the school year. However, even if you return to work during the school year, you will not have accumulated as much holdback as you otherwise would have accumulated had you not gone on a leave of absence.

NEW HIRES – WHEN TO EXPECT YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK

Employees other than Bus Drivers and Bus Attendants

If you begin work at the start of the school year, you should expect to receive your first check at the end of the month you begin work. This depends on proper paper work being completed and forwarded to the Human Resource Services department in time to meet the payroll cut-off. If the paper work is not received in a timely manner, you should expect to receive your first check on the next scheduled pay date. As an example, if you begin work on July 31, 2002 (the first day of the August payroll period for 10 and 11-month employees), and your paperwork is not sent to the Human Resource Services department until after the 20th of August, you probably will not receive your first paycheck until around September 5th. You may want to follow up with the secretary at your worksite to make sure the paperwork is sent to the Human Resources Services Department in a timely manner.

If you begin work during the school year, it will depend on when you start in the month as to when you will receive your first check. For instance, if you start after the 15th of the month, you probably will not receive your first check until the next scheduled pay date. Even if you start early in the month, if your school secretary does not forward the paperwork to the Human Resource Services department in time to meet the payroll cut-off, you will not receive your first check until the next scheduled pay date. You may want to follow up with the secretary at your work site to make sure the paperwork is sent to the Human Resources Services Department in a timely manner.

Bus Drivers and Bus Attendants

New Bus Drivers and Bus Attendants should receive their first check in accordance with the pay date assigned to the payroll period for which they begin work. New Bus Drivers and Bus Attendants should request a copy of the payroll calendar to understand when they will be paid.

SICK LEAVE AND VACATION LEAVE – HOW IT IS EARNED

SICK LEAVE

Sick leave is available for each regular employee who cannot work due to the following:

- Personal illness
- Illness of father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife, child, close relative, or household member.

Instructional employees are entitled to four days of sick leave, as of the first day of employment for each contract year. Other employees get four days of sick leave at the end of the first month. Thereafter, one day of sick leave is earned for each month of employment. It is credited at the end of that month and cannot be used prior to the time it is earned and credited. However, employees can only earn one day of sick leave for each month of employment during the year.

Sick leave is cumulative from year to year. There is no limit on the number of days which an employee may accrue, except that at least one-half of this cumulative leave must be earned in the district granting the leave. You can transfer in with leave from another district, but you can bring in only as much as you earn in a given year. For example, after earning 10 days of leave in Polk County, you may transfer in an equal number of leave days from another district, until all days have been transferred into Polk County.

When granting leave, the Superintendent may require written verification of illness from a licensed physician or from the county health doctor.

Teachers will be credited with the equivalent of four (4) days of **sick leave** on the first day of employment each school year and will be credited with one (1) day at the end of each month until the maximum amount allowed is reached. **Other regular school board employees** will be credited with the equivalent of four (4) days of sick leave on the last day of the first payroll period of the school year and will be credited with one (1) day at the end of each successive month until the maximum amount allowed is reached. The amount of sick leave credited in a school year shall not exceed one (1) day times the number of months employed during the school year. For example, teachers will be credited four (4) days at the first of August when they start work and one (1) day at the end of August through January to reach a total of ten (10) days earned and credited.

Vacation Leave applies only to 12-month employees and is credited at the end of each month at a rate set by board policy. Employees with less than five (5) years of service earn vacation at the rate of 13 days per year. Employees with at least five (5) years of service but less than ten (10) years of service shall earn vacation at the rate of 16.25 days per year. Employees with ten (10) or more years of service shall earn vacation at the rate of 19.50 days per year. The maximum amount of vacation that may be carried forward at December 31 each year is 320 hours.

Sick Leave is earned and used in numbers of hours and is shown on your paycheck as such. Your daily planned working hours determines the number of hours credited. For example, teachers who work 7.75 hours per day will be credited with 31.0 hours at the first of August (4 days x 7.75 hours) and another 7.75 hours at the end of August to show a total amount credited of 38.75 on the August paycheck. Teachers are used as the base for calculating the maximum number of sick leave hours to be credited for other groups. Most teachers work 1519 hours per year (196 days x 7.75 hours per day) and should earn 77.50 hours of sick leave (10 days x 7.75 hours per day). Therefore, teachers earn sick leave at the rate of 5.103 % of annual working hours. The percentage used to calculate the maximum number of hours of sick leave earned for other groups based on annual planned working hours is 5.103%.

Personal Chargeable to Sick Leave represents the amount of sick leave that may be used for personal reasons. Employees are credited with 6 days on July 1 of each school year to the extent they have sufficient sick leave balance at that time. The amount of personal leave may not exceed the amount of sick leave. For example, a new non-teacher is hired on July 1 but is not credited with sick leave until July 31 and credited with 4 days. The employee in this example will not earn personal leave until July 31 and will only earn 4 days of personal leave on July 31 because that is all the sick leave he/she has. He/she will be credited with another additional personal day at the end of August and at the end of September until he/she reaches 6 days. When personal leave is used, regular sick leave is charged as well. Employees must report personal leave through established procedures, and the leave must be approved or granted in advance. If circumstances make advance application impossible, such leave may be authorized and granted, if promptly reported and adequately explained.

PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS

Deductions can be taken from employees' paychecks to cover items such as school board health and life benefits, supplemental insurance coverage provided by outside carriers, union dues, membership to health fitness clubs, charitable contributions such as the United Way, court ordered garnishments, and Tax Sheltered Annuities. Board sponsored health and life coverage will be provided to employees upon employment and again each year during the open enrollment process and are maintained by the Risk Management department. Other deductions are arranged between the employee and the company providing the insurance coverage or services. A standard authorization card should be forwarded to the payroll department indicating the amount of the monthly deduction with the employee's signature evidencing authorization of the deduction. When deductions start is subject to the deadline set by the payroll department each month for entering deduction information into the payroll system.

Tax sheltered annuities are maintained by the Risk Management Department as well. Please contact them for a list of companies authorized to sell these products to school board employees.

Deductions are set to go into arrears if the employee does not have enough earnings in a pay period to cover all deductions. If earnings are not sufficient to cover all deductions, the deductions not taken will be caught up in the first successive payroll period that has enough earnings for the deductions to be taken. Pay attention to your paycheck stub. If you see that a deduction did not come out of your check, call the Payroll Department. You may need to be prepared to have a double deduction the next payroll period.

Contact Information for Miscellaneous Deductions

ASBA Association of School Board Administrators	863-499-2866
AETNA Life	863-343-6992
AFSCME	863-967-7899
American Family Life	863-293-7762
American Foundation Life	800-955-4304
American Heritage	800-521-3535
Colonial Life	800-531-1463
Cypress Garden Health Club	863-324-8400
FASA Florida Association of School Administrators	850-224-3626
Florida Prepaid College	800-552-4723
Gold's Gym	863-646-3036
Horace Mann	863-533-5335
Lakeland YMCA	863-644-3528
Lifestyle Fitness	863-688-6696
Lone Star	800-7430122
Legal Wise	863-967-8045
Lake Wales YMCA	863-676-9441
MidFlorida Credit Union	863-646-7587
National Teacher Association	800-825-5682
Polk Education Association	863-533-0908
Professional Education Foundation	863-534-0803
Professional Educator Network	800-311-7770
Pesco	800-544-4116
Peninsula State Legal Services	863-425-8124
Provident Life Insurance	800-251-7420
Southern Security Life	863-534-3135
Trustmark Insurance	800-918-8877
Transamerica	800-346-1608
United Negro College Fund	407-896-6940
United States Savings Bond	800-426-9314
United Way	863-648-1500
UNUM	863-967-8045
Washington National	800-321-9642

****More information concerning payroll policies is available in the appropriate Collective Bargaining Agreements and School Board Policy. If you have any questions, please speak with your supervisor.****

EMPLOYEE **H**ANDBOOK & **B**ENEFITS **I**NFORMATION

2007-2009

Section 5
Risk Management

Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions by School Board of Polk County Employees

Q. Is Blue Cross Blue Shield of Florida (BCBSFL) my insurance plan?

A. **No, the School Board of Polk County is self-funded insurance plan. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Florida (BCBSFL) administers the benefits for the school board as the Third Party Administrator.**

Q. What is Coordination of Benefits (COB)?

A. **COB is applied when Covered Person is covered under multi contracts or providing health care benefits that contain a Coordination of Benefits provision. COB would apply to any group insurance, group-type self-insurance or HMO plan, automobile policy or any plan, program, or insurance established pursuant to Workers' Compensation or other legislation of similar purpose. Standards are in place, which specifically identify which plan must pay first, based on the Common COB provision.**

Q. Do I have to utilize a Specialist in the same group/clinic as my Primary Care Provider (PCP)?

A. **No, you do not have to utilize a Specialist in the same group/clinic as your PCP. Most groups/clinics will direct you to physicians within the group/clinic; however, you may use any participating specialist with the School Board of Polk County Network.**

Q. What's the difference between Fully Insured and Self-Funded?

A. **The School Board of Polk County is a Self-Funded Plan, which means no premiums are paid to a carrier; actual claims are paid directly from School Board funds. The School Board selects a Third Party Administrator to handle the Customer Services, Claims Processing, Provider Contracting, and ID Card production for the covered members.**

Q. Can a grandchild be covered under the health plan?

A. **Legal guardianship only. If the child is a newborn and a dependent of a covered dependent, then only for 18 months.**

Q. Can plans be changed during the year?

A. **No.**

Q. Can I add a dependent or delete a dependent during the year?

A. **No, unless it is a valid lifestyle change.**

See list below:

- 1. Commencement or termination of employment**
- 2. Exhaustion of COBRA continuation**
- 3. Marriage or divorce**
- 4. Birth of child**
- 5. Adoption or legal guardianship**
- 6. All employees must provide written notification (change of status form) with supporting documentation, within thirty (30) days of the occurrence.**

Q. If coverage is waived now, can it be picked up any time during the year?
A. **Only with a valid lifestyle change – must have documentation, within thirty (30) of occurrences.**

Q. I am getting ready to retire – do I need to apply for Medicare Part B?
A. **Yes, if eligible prior to your 65th birthday.**

Q. How can I get a provider directory?
A. **Provider Directories are available on BCBSFL.com website effective October 1, 2006.**

Q. Do I have prescription coverage?
A. **Yes. Prescription coverage is provided by WHI (1-800-207-2538)**

Q. What type procedures require pre-certification?
A. **Inpatient procedures only.**

Q. How does COBRA work?
A. **COBRA continues your same coverage, but you have to pay the premiums and the time to stay on COBRA is limited.**

Q. What drugs are considered to be maintenance drugs?
A. **Prescriptions that are used to treat chronic/long term diseases (such as hypertension, diabetes or heart conditions) are considered to be maintenance drugs.**

Q. What is covered under my plan?
A. **Covered medical expenses or any medically necessary treatments, services, or supplies that are not specifically excluded for coverage under the plan are covered as long as you use participating providers. Claims are paid at the higher benefit level.**

****This information does not guarantee benefits or coverage; please refer to your Polk County School Board Insurance Benefits Handbook for more details.**

Risk Management Staff

Steve Henderson, Risk Management Director

Phone: (863) 534-0785 Internal ext. 51572

Donna Robbins, Secretary

Primary Responsibility – Vehicle Accidents, Student Injuries and General Liability.

Secondary – Workers' Compensation

Phone: (863) 534-0585 Internal ext. 51402

Teresa Green, Risk Management Specialist

Primary Responsibility – Coordination of Employee Health Benefits. Death Claims.

Secondary – Benefits for Retirees, Employees on leave, COBRA and TSA's.

Phone: (863) 534-0584 Internal ext. 51401

Kathy Faulkner, Insurance Clerk

Primary Responsibility – Retiree Benefits.

Secondary – Group Health Benefits.

Phone: (863) 534-0789 Internal ext. 51576

Belinda Hancock, Insurance Clerk

Primary Responsibility – Workers' Compensation (employee injuries)

Secondary – Vehicle Accidents, Student Injuries and General Liability.

Phone: (863) 534-0581 Internal ext. 51399

Pam Thompson, Insurance Clerk

Primary Responsibility – New Employee Benefits, SAP input and information maintenance.

Secondary – Group Health Benefits, COBRA.

Phone (863) 534-0583 Internal ext. 51400

Jennifer Hooper, Insurance Clerk

Primary Responsibility – TSA's. Check posting for all Employees paying direct while on leave.

Termination of Employee benefits on SAP.

Secondary – Group Health Benefits

Phone: (863) 519-8458 Internal ext. 57801

Connie Ashley, Blue Cross Blue Shield On-Site Representative

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK & BENEFITS INFORMATION

2007-2009

Section 6

Employee Policies & Procedures for Students

Bullying
Child Abuse Reporting
Code of Student Conduct
Compulsory School Attendance
Critical Issues
Home Education
Intervention Assistance Team
Psychotropic Medication Administration
Student Threats of Harm to Others
Youth Suicide
Indicators of Child Abuse & Neglect

BULLYING

The Polk County School District is committed to creating a safe, healthy, learning environment for all students that is free from bullying and harassment. All employees are expected to model and support a school culture that promotes positive interactions and respect for others. Bullying is more specifically addressed in the Code of Student Conduct, Section 6.07.

Bullying:

- Is aggressive behavior or intentional harm-doing.
- Can be physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual.
- Is carried out repeatedly over time.
- Occurs within an interpersonal relationship characterized by an imbalance of power.

Staff members who witness or become aware of bullying will immediately intervene in the following manner:

- Establish the safety of the victim of bullying.
- Report to administration.

CHILD ABUSE

School policy 6Gx53-8.013 states: When child abuse and/or neglect are suspected by school personnel, the law requires the following procedure be followed:

The suspected child abuse and/or neglect will be reported immediately to the Florida Abuse Registry, 1-800-962-2873. See Child Abuse Indicator information at the end of the section.

The “Notice of Referral to Child Abuse” form should be returned anonymously to your school administrator as soon as possible after calling the Child Abuse Registry at 1-800-962-2873. This form may be obtained by accessing the Student Services Folder within Outlook, Public Folders or in the Student Services Manual.

CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

The Code of Student Conduct was developed to inform students and parents of acceptable student behavior and the disciplinary alternatives for modifying unacceptable behavior. The document is updated on an annual basis and outlines the rights and responsibilities of the School Board and the students with regard to the conduct of students while attending school or a school sponsored activity, while on school property or a school bus, or at a designated school bus stop. Discipline and appeal procedures, as well as consequences for violations, are included.

COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Florida statute requires all students, ages 6 – 16, to attend school. Students are considered truant if they have 5 unexcused absences within a 30 day calendar period or 10 unexcused absences within a 90 day calendar period. Truancy should be reported to appropriate personnel at the school.

Polk County Public Schools

Student Attendance Procedures

Location of policy and procedures

- Detailed policies and procedures will be in *The Polk County Employee Handbook* with references to other documents.

How and when will attendance be taken

- Elementary: Input will be completed by designated time, always before end of school day. In elementary schools with departments and in specialty classes (art, music, *etc.*), schools should establish their own procedures for the taking of attendance. This attendance does not have to be reported on Elegrade.
- Middle: Period by period attendance will be input no later than the end of the day unless there are special mitigating circumstances. The official designation that a student is in attendance will be if the student attends any part of the day.
- High: Period by period attendance will be input by the end of the day unless there are special mitigating circumstances. The official designation that a student is in attendance will be if the student attends any part of the day.
- All levels: The method used by substitute teachers in inputting daily attendance will be specified at the beginning of each school year. This should be noted in the school's faculty handbook and elsewhere as appropriate.

How attendance will be reported to parents

- Elementary: Daily attendance will be reported to parents on the report card.
- Middle and High: Period by period attendance will be reported to parents on the report card.

How compliance will be assured at the school and classroom level

- Each school will name one person other than the principal as the attendance manager. This will generally not be the network manager.
- Compliance with timely and accurate reporting will be assured by the principal and the attendance manager. Regular checking on timeliness and accuracy of input will be assured by the principal and senior directors.
- Non-compliance by a teacher will result in verbal reminders, written reminders, progressive discipline as outlined in the *Teacher Collective Bargaining Agreement*. Section 4.9 of the *Teacher Collective Bargaining Agreement* states "Among the duties and responsibilities for which teachers will be accountable to perform are as follows:
3. Punctual and accurate record keeping."
- Network managers and attendance managers must attend annual training for their respective grade levels and attendance software applications.
- Attendance manager and administrative personnel must attend a Security Awareness class.

Training in attendance procedures

- All staff members should have an understanding of the Pinnacle/Elegrade procedures concerning attendance. The principal (generally in cooperation with the network manager) should assure that the attendance training is done. Written documentation of which employees received the training should be maintained.
- Teachers should receive training by network manager and/or the attendance manager.

Excused and unexcused absences

- Procedures concerning excused and unexcused absences will follow those outlined in the *Student Code of Conduct*. Input into Pinnacle should follow the policy.

CRITICAL ISSUES

The Polk County School Board recognizes that questions concerning various critical issues may be raised by a student in or out of the classroom. The Critical Issues Handbook was adopted by the School Board to ensure that parents and students receive a consistent message by all School Board personnel. **It is important that personal values and opinions not be shared.** The primary goal is to teach students traditional values such as respect, kindness, trust, and honesty. It is important for students to understand and decide what is healthy behavior for one's body, mind, and soul. The Florida Legislature advocates abstinence as the expected standard for all school-aged children and youth (Division of Statutory Revision, 1996). The Polk County School Board supports this recommendation and the Comprehensive Health Curriculum used by the school district is abstinence based in its philosophy and orientation. **Students should always be encouraged to discuss critical issues with their parents or guardians, especially in the area of personal/family values and morals.**

HOME EDUCATION

Florida law allows parents to educate their children at home. Information and procedures for home education are located on the Student Services web site at www.Polk-fl.net/studentervices/Homed3-05.pdf.

INTERVENTION ASSISTANCE TEAM

The Intervention Assistance Team is a multi-disciplinary, school-level team utilized to provide teachers with support when students are not successful in the classroom setting. This team utilizes a problem solving approach to identify needs and develop interventions for students who are experiencing academic, behavioral, and/or attendance problems. Teachers may access this team by contacting the referral coordinator at the school.

PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

The 2005 Florida Legislature passed Senate (SB) 1090 which created Section 1006.0625, Florida Statutes (F.S.), and Administration of Psychotropic Medications. This legislation, which took effect on July 1, 2005, prohibits public schools from denying any student access to programs or services because the parent has refused to place the student on psychotropic medication. Further, any medical decision made to address a student's needs is a matter among the student, the student's parents, and a competent health care professional chosen by the parent.

School teachers and district personnel may share school-based observations of a student's academic, functional, and behavioral performances with the student's parents and offer program options and other assistance based on these observations. School teachers and district personnel **may not** compel or attempt to compel any specific action by the parent or require a student to take medication.

An amendment was added by the United States Congress to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 that prohibits state and local educational agency personnel from requiring a student to obtain a prescription for a substance covered by the Controlled Substance Act as a condition of attending school, receiving an evaluation, or receiving services.

Section 1006.0625, F.S., also indicates the parent's right to refuse psychological screening. Rule 6A-6.03311, Florida Administrative Code (procedural Safeguards for Students with Disabilities), currently requires informed parental consent prior to conducting an initial individual evaluation to determine eligibility and prior to initial provision of specially designed instruction and related services to a student with a disability.

STUDENT THREATS OF HARM TO OTHERS

Threats of harm to others or threatened violent acts should be immediately reported to the school administrator, so a threat assessment team may be formed to assess and intervene. School administrators have been provided with the “Polk County Public Schools Threat Assessment Procedures and Guidelines.” Teachers and support personnel should not attempt to intervene without following these procedures under the guidance of school administration.

YOUTH SUICIDE

Teachers and other school personnel in direct contact with students may become aware that a student is considering suicide. It is important for staff to recognize the signs and symptoms of suicide and to intervene immediately. Suicide threats must be taken seriously. As teachers, do not keep suicide threats a secret or attempt to resolve problems alone! Help is needed and may be obtained through your school administrators, student services personnel, and in some situations, law enforcement.

Some of the risk factors and warning signs of suicide may include:

- serious depression
- increasing isolation or withdrawal
- giving away prized possessions
- poor academic performance
- making statements about wanting to die
- acting in a violent fashion
- taking unnecessary risks
- threatening to commit suicide or previous attempts
- over-reacting to perceived loss or failure
- suddenly happy for no apparent reason after long depression
- abusing drugs and/or alcohol
- gun available
- changes in eating, sleeping, or grooming habits
- recent loss

One sign may or may not signal trouble. More than one sign often means that help is necessary. Notice how long and how intense the signs are and how many are present at one time.

What to do:

1. Provide appropriate supervision of student (do not leave alone or send home without intervention).
2. Inform the principal or administrative staff of the suicidal student.
3. The school administrator (or his/her designee) is responsible for notification of parents of the suicidal student. If administration is not available, proceed to notify parent and continue to attempt to make contact with administrator.
4. Provide the parents and student with a list of community resources and stress that immediate action should be taken.
5. Consult with school counselor, psychologist, and/or social worker, or if not available, the district Crisis Intervention Team (Call Psychological Services, 534-0958).
6. Continue to monitor the student’s progress, support the student, and work collaboratively with outside professionals and agencies.

If a student is imminently in danger, the School Resource Officer or other law enforcement should be immediately contacted. If the student is injured, call 911. Your school psychologist, guidance counselor, or social worker may also be contacted for information on suicide prevention and intervention.

If an employee indicates that he or she is considering suicide, immediately contact your administrator.

**INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT
ABUSE REGISTRY 1-800-962-2873**

CATEGORY	CHILD'S APPEARANCE	CHILD'S BEHAVIOR	CARETAKER'S BEHAVIOR
NEGLECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Consistently dirty, unwashed, hungry, or inappropriately dressed. ❖ Without supervision for extended periods of time or when engaged in dangerous activities. ❖ Constantly tired or listless. ❖ Has unattended physical problems or lacks routine medical care. ❖ Is exploited, overworked, or kept from attending school. ❖ Has been abandoned. ❖ Malnutrition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Is engaging in delinquent acts (e.g., vandalism, drinking, prostitution, drug uses, etc.). ❖ Is begging or stealing food. ❖ Poor school attendance. ❖ Extended stays at school. ❖ Consistent hunger. ❖ Clinging. ❖ Assumes adult responsibilities. ❖ Excessive caregiver for siblings/exploitation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Misuses alcohol or other drugs. ❖ Maintains chaotic home life. ❖ Shows evidence of apathy or futility. ❖ Is mentally ill or of diminished intelligence. ❖ Has a long-term chronic illness. ❖ Has history of neglect as a child.
PHYSICAL ABUSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Bruises and welts (on the face, lips, or mouth; In various stages of healing; on large areas of the torso, back, buttocks, or thighs; In unusual patterns, clustered, or reflective of the instrument used to inflict them; on several different surface areas). ❖ Burns (cigar or cigarette burns; glove or sock like burns or doughnut shaped burns of the buttocks or genitalia indicative of immersion in hot liquid; rope burns on the arms, legs, neck or torso; patterned burns that show the shape of the item [iron, grill, etc.] used to inflict them). ❖ Fractures (skull, jaw, or nasal fractures; spiral fractures of the long (arm and leg) bones; fractures in various stages of healing; multiple fractures; any fracture in a child under the age of two). ❖ Lacerations and abrasions (to the mouth, lip, gums, or eye; to the external genitalia). ❖ Human bite marks. ❖ Hair pulled out of scalp. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Wary of physical contact with adults. ❖ Apprehensive when other children cry. ❖ Demonstrates extremes in behavior (e.g., extreme aggressiveness or withdrawal). ❖ Seems frightened of parents. ❖ Reports injury by parents. ❖ Engaging in delinquent acts. ❖ Protective of siblings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Has a history of abuse as a child. ❖ Uses harsh discipline inappropriate to child's age, transgression, and condition. ❖ Offers illogical, unconvincing, contradictory, or no explanation of child's injury. ❖ Seems unconcerned about child. ❖ Significantly misperceives child (e.g., sees him/her as bad, evil, a monster, etc.). ❖ Psychotic or psychopathic. ❖ Misuses alcohol or other drugs. ❖ Attempts to conceal child's injury or protects identity of person responsible.
EMOTIONAL MALTREATMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Emotional maltreatment, often less tangible than other forms of child abuse and neglect, can be indicated by behaviors of the child and the caretaker. ❖ Lags in physical development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Appears overly compliant, passive, and undemanding. ❖ Is extremely aggressive, demanding, or rageful. ❖ Shows overly adaptive behaviors, either inappropriately adult (e.g., parents other children) or inappropriately infantile (e.g., rocks constantly, sucks thumb, is neurotic). ❖ Lags in physical, emotional, and intellectual development. ❖ Attempts suicide. ❖ Night terrors. ❖ Poor self esteem. ❖ Profane language. ❖ Speech disorders (stutters, refuses to speak). ❖ Lack of trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Blames or belittles child. ❖ Is cold and rejecting. ❖ Withholds love. ❖ Treats siblings unequally. ❖ Seems unconcerned about child's problems.
SEXUAL ABUSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Has torn, stained, or bloody underclothing. ❖ Has venereal disease. ❖ Pain, bruises, itching in genital area. ❖ Difficulty in sitting or walking. ❖ Pregnancy. ❖ Peculiar odor. ❖ Bedwetting/soiling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Appears withdrawn or engages in fantasy or infantile behavior. ❖ Has a poor peer relationship. ❖ Is engaging in delinquent acts or runs away. ❖ States he/she has been sexually assaulted by parent/caretaker. ❖ Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior. ❖ Refuses to dress-out in P.E. ❖ Regressive behavior (rocking, thumb sucking). ❖ Suicidal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Extremely protective or jealous of child. ❖ Encourages child to engage in prostitution or sexual acts in the presence of caretaker. ❖ Has been sexually abused as a child. ❖ Is experiencing marital difficulties. ❖ Misuses alcohol or other drugs. ❖ Is frequently absent from the home.

