

2026-2027 Brantley County Schools



Employee Handbook

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The Brantley County Employee Handbook is a document that will be updated on a continual basis as policies in this handbook change. The Brantley County Employee Handbook can be accessed on the Brantley County School District website as well as the schools' websites.

Brantley County Board of Education Policies can be found at the following URL:

https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/SB_ePolicy/SB_PolicyOverview.aspx?S=4015

THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS

505-6-.01 January 1, 2024

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

(2) **Definitions.**

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

(3) **Standards.**

(a) Standard 1: Legal Compliance - An educator shall abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to the commission or conviction of a felony or of any crime involving moral turpitude; of any other criminal offense involving the

manufacture, distribution, trafficking, sale, or possession of a controlled substance or marijuana as provided for in Chapter 13 of Title 16; or of any other sexual offense as provided for in Code Section 16-6-1 through 16-6-17, 16-6-20, 16-6-22.2, or 16-12-100; or any other laws applicable to the profession. As used herein, conviction includes a finding or verdict of guilty, or a plea of nolo contendere, regardless of whether an appeal of the conviction has been sought; a situation where first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt pursuant to the charge was granted; and a situation where an adjudication of guilt or sentence was otherwise withheld or not entered on the charge or the charge was otherwise disposed of in a similar manner in any jurisdiction.

(b) Standard 2: Conduct with Students - An educator shall always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. Committing any act of child abuse, including physical and verbal abuse;
2. Committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment;
3. Committing any sexual act with a student or soliciting such from a student;
4. Engaging in or permitting harassment of or misconduct toward a student;
5. Soliciting, encouraging, or consummating an inappropriate written, verbal, electronic, or physical relationship with a student;
6. Furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student; or
7. Failing to prevent the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs by students under the educator's supervision (including but not limited to at the educator's residence or any other private setting).

(c) Standard 3: Alcohol or Drugs - An educator shall refrain from the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs during the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. Being on school or Local Unit of Administration (LUA)/school district premises or at a school or a LUA/school district-related activity while under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs; and
2. Being on school or LUA/school district premises or at a school-related activity involving students while under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcohol. A school-related activity includes, but is not limited to, any activity sponsored by the school or school system (booster clubs, parent-teacher organizations, or any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum i.e. Foreign Language trips, etc.).

(i) For the purposes of this standard, an educator shall be considered "under the influence" if the educator exhibits one or more of the following indicators, including but not limited to: slurred speech, enlarged pupils, bloodshot eyes, general personality changes, lack of physical coordination, poor motor skills, memory problems, concentration problems, etc.

(d) Standard 4: Honesty - An educator shall exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to, falsifying, misrepresenting, or omitting:

1. Professional qualifications, criminal history, college or staff development credit and/or degrees, academic award, and employment history;
2. Information submitted to federal, state, local school districts and other governmental agencies;
3. Information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel;
4. Reasons for absences or leaves;
5. Information submitted in the course of an official inquiry/investigation; and

6. Information submitted in the course of professional practice.

(e) Standard 5: Public Funds and Property - An educator entrusted with public funds and property shall honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. Misusing public or school-related funds;
2. Failing to account for funds collected from students or parents;
3. Submitting fraudulent requests or documentation for reimbursement of expenses or for pay (including fraudulent or purchased degrees, documents, or coursework);
4. Co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts; and
5. Using school or school district property without the approval of the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee.

(f) Standard 6: Remunerative Conduct - An educator shall maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. Soliciting students or parents of students, or school or LUA/school district personnel, to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee;
2. Accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest;
3. Tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee; and
4. Coaching, instructing, promoting athletic camps, summer leagues, etc. that involves students in an educator's school system and from whom the educator receives remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee. These types of activities must be in compliance with all rules and regulations of the Georgia High School Association.

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

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

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

1. Failure to report to the GaPSC all requested information on documents required by the GaPSC when applying for or renewing any certificate with the GaPSC;

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

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

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

1. Committing any act that breaches Test Security; and
2. Compromising the integrity of the assessment.

(4) Reporting.

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

(5) Disciplinary Action.

- (a) The GaPSC is authorized to suspend, revoke, or deny certificates, to issue a reprimand or warning, or to monitor the educator's conduct and performance after an investigation is held and notice and opportunity for a hearing are provided to the certificate holder. Any of the following grounds shall be considered cause for disciplinary action against the educator:
 1. Unethical conduct as outlined in The Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);
 2. Disciplinary action against a certificate on grounds consistent with those specified in the Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);

3. Order from a court of competent jurisdiction or a request from the Department of Human Services that the certificate should be suspended or the application for certification should be denied for non-payment of child support (O.C.G.A. §19-6- 28.1 and §19-11-9.3);
4. Suspension or revocation of any professional license or certificate;
5. Violation of any other laws and rules applicable to the profession (O.C.G.A. §16- 13-111); and
6. Any other good and sufficient cause that renders an educator unfit for employment as an educator.

(b) An individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended may not serve as a volunteer or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher or, in any other position during the period of his or her revocation, suspension or denial for a violation of The Code of Ethics for Educators. The superintendent and the educator designated by the superintendent/Local Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that an individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district. Both the superintendent and the superintendent's designee must hold GaPSC certification. Should the superintendent's certificate be revoked, suspended, or denied, the Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that the superintendent whose certificate has been revoked, suspended, or denied is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district.

(c) The GaPSC is authorized to determine no probable cause as provided in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-984.4(e) and § 20-2-984.5(e) if:

1. After a preliminary investigation is concluded it is unlikely that there exists a preponderance of the evidence necessary to prove at a hearing that a violation occurred; or
2. After a hearing the administrative law judge makes a determination that there is not a preponderance of the evidence necessary to prove that a violation occurred.

(d) The GaPSC is authorized to determine no further action is necessary pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-984.5(a) if after review of the report of the preliminary investigation, sanctions should not be imposed.

(6) Sanctions.

(a) As outlined in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-984.5(c), the GaPSC has the discretion to issue a probable cause sanction against an educator. Common violations and associated sanctions can be found in the accompanying GaPSC Guidance.

1. Denial is the refusal to grant initial certification to an applicant for a certificate;
2. Monitoring is the quarterly appraisal of the educator's conduct by the GaPSC through contact with the educator and his or her employer. As a condition of monitoring, an educator may be required to submit periodic criminal background check (GCIC). The GaPSC specifies the length of the monitoring period;
3. Reprimand admonishes the certificate holder for his or her conduct. The reprimand cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action;
4. Revocation is the permanent invalidation of any certificate held by the educator. A Voluntary Surrender is equivalent to and has the same effect as a revocation. A Voluntary Surrender shall be accepted and becomes effective upon receipt by the GaPSC;
5. Suspension is the temporary invalidation of any certificate for a period of time specified by the GaPSC; and

6. Warning informs the certificate holder that his or her conduct is unethical. The warning cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.

(7) Application Procedures.

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

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

DRESS AND APPEARANCE

Employees of the Brantley County Board of Education are expected to maintain a high standard of professional conduct. Teacher dress and personal appearance while working in the Brantley County Schools, and while representing the schools or system in related activities, should be such as to reflect pride in the schools. Employees are expected to dress in an appropriate and professional manner as determined by job duties and responsibilities. Good judgment in choice of wearing apparel and proper grooming helps to promote a positive instructional atmosphere conducive to learning.

Principals/supervisors or their designee shall have the authority to make a professional judgment as to the appropriateness of dress of an employee while performing their duties.

Principals/supervisors may periodically designate spirit, casual or similar days on which the dress code may be modified.

Employees may be required to wear a uniform, protective clothing, or other types of protective devices as dictated by various tasks encountered on the job.

DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE (BCBOE Policy GAMA)

The Board of Education declares that the manufacture, distribution, sale or possession of controlled substances, marijuana and other dangerous drugs in an unlawful manner or being at work under the influence of alcohol, controlled substances, marijuana or other dangerous drugs is a serious threat to the public health, safety and welfare. With this in mind, the Board declares that its work force must be absolutely free of any person who would knowingly manufacture, distribute, sell or possess a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug in an unlawful manner. This prohibition specifically includes, but is not limited to, the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance or alcohol in the employee's workplace. This prohibition also includes, but is not limited to, an employee being under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances while on duty.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All personnel assigned to a school are responsible for the following as directed by the principal/supervisor:

- a. Performing all school duties to the best of their ability;
- b. Fulfilling designated individual responsibilities;
- c. Working cooperatively with all system personnel;
- d. Working at designated tasks at an assigned place during the school day;
- e. Working with extra school activities as assigned by the principal/supervisor.

HANDLING MONIES

All funds collected by students or staff members for school, club, or class purposes must be turned in to the bookkeeper by the end of the business day to be deposited in the bank. Monies must be organized and coins wrapped. A receipt will be given for all money turned in to the bookkeeper. The sponsor of each organization should check with the bookkeeper to keep up with records and balance for that organization during his/her planning period or after school. Do not send students to the bookkeeper for information. Financial reports submitted to the Board of Education require that accounts be itemized. Procedures to be followed in handling school financial matters are as follows:

- 1) Expenditures, purchases, and withdrawals are made only by and with the approval of the Principal. The purchaser becomes personally responsible unless there is prior approval. Three requirements for payment are as follows:
 - A. A purchase request submitted to the school/department bookkeeper;
 - B. Prior approval of the Principal/Director;
 - C. An itemized statement of charges from the vendor which includes official identification of the vendor on the invoice.
- 2) Receipts should be provided for all money collected except in cases when the item of service is given in the transaction.
- 3) Authorization of purchase requests, when properly completed, will authorize a vendor or business to deliver goods or services and send an invoice and statement to the school for payment..
- 4) Do not allow students to be responsible for funds.
- 5) No money is to be left in the building at any time. ***Teachers or sponsors are responsible for safe keeping of money not in the possession of the bookkeeper.***
- 6) Approved check requests should be submitted to the bookkeeper at least one day in advance of the need. Do not send students to pick up checks. NO BLANK travelCHECKS WILL BE ISSUED, NOR WILL CHECKS BE MADE TO "CASH".
- 7) Travel expense reimbursement will follow state guidelines. The checking out of unspecified funds is not in keeping with sound bookkeeping procedures and will not be practiced. NO SALES TAX WILL BE REIMBURSED. The school's tax exempt number and exemption forms for lodging can be obtained from the bookkeeper.

HARASSMENT (*BCBOE Policy GAEB*)

It is the policy of this School District to prohibit any act of harassment of employees by other employees based upon race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability at all times and during all occasions while at school, in the workplace or at any school event or activity. Any such act shall result in prompt and appropriate discipline, including the possible termination of employment.

TOBACCO USE

Recognizing the health hazards of tobacco use and to ensure a smoke-free environment for students and all employees, the following rules shall govern smoking and/or the use of tobacco products.

No student, staff member or school visitor is permitted to use any tobacco product at any time, including non-school hours 24 hours per day, seven days per week:

- In any building, facility, or vehicle owned, leased, rented, or chartered by the Brantley County Schools.
- On any school grounds and property - including athletic fields and parking lots - owned, leased, rented, or chartered by Brantley County Schools; or
- At any school-sponsored or school-related event on-campus or off-campus.

In addition, no student is permitted to possess a tobacco product.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment Status

The following terms are used to describe the classification of employees and their employment status:

Exempt. Employees whose positions meet specific tests established by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and applicable state law and who are exempt from overtime pay requirements. Examples: teachers and administrators, certain administrative support staff. **Non-exempt.** Employees whose positions do not meet FLSA and state exemption tests. Examples: paraprofessionals, clerks, most secretaries, bus drivers, cafeteria staff, custodians, maintenance personnel.

Full-time. Employees scheduled to work 30 hours or more per week.

Part-time. Employees scheduled to work less than 20 hours per week. Those employees working fewer than 20 hours per week may not be eligible for benefits.

Certified. Most employees who are required to have a certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission or other comparable licensing organization.

Classified. Employees who are not required to have a certificate or license to practice their trade in the state, except that paraprofessionals are considered classified employees. Classified employees are “at-will” employees and as such may be terminated from their position at any time by the school system.

Equal Opportunity (BCBOE Policy GAAA)

The School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, or sex in its employment practices. It is the policy of the Board of Education to comply fully with the requirements of Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) and all accompanying regulations.

Any employee, applicant for employment, or other person who believes he or she has been discriminated against or harassed in violation of this policy must make a complaint in accordance with the procedures outlined below.

Any employee, applicant for employment, or other person who believes he or she has been discriminated against or harassed in violation of this policy must make a complaint in accordance with the procedures outlined in BCBOE Policy GAAA.

Contracts

Each certified employee who has been approved for employment in a teaching or leadership position shall be offered a legal and binding contract for the employment period.

Recommendations are made by the principal/supervisor to the Superintendent and by the Superintendent to the Board of Education. All employees are hired by the Board of Education at the recommendation of the Superintendent.

Contract renewal from year to year depends upon job availability and a recommendation for re-employment by the Superintendent. The Board must approve these recommendations prior to the issuance of contracts annually. If, however, there is a need to fill a vacancy, or to hire additional personnel (except administrative positions) during the time between its regularly scheduled meetings, the Board authorizes the Superintendent to employ qualified personnel in a temporary or substitute status. Full-time hires only become benefit eligible after official approval of the Board.

Contracts for new employees are temporary and are not considered binding until clearance is received from the required fingerprinting and criminal records check, release from any previous contract, and verification of certification.

A certificated employee who violates his/her contract with a school system may have his/her certificate suspended or revoked by the PSC.

Extended Year & Day

Extended assignments are considered as contract amendments and obligate the system and the employee for extended assignments such as extra-curricular activities and compensated responsibilities. This is an amendment of the employee's contract and requires the fulfillment of those responsibilities. Such amendments shall be in writing.

Extended year compensation shall be issued for work assigned and performed during a specified period of time beyond the approved work year calendar. The

approved number of days for extended year compensation must be worked during the fiscal year for which a contract is awarded. Monthly and yearly documentation of extended salary time and program responsibilities will be maintained and reported as required. All extended year compensation is contingent upon available funding and need. There shall be no tenure or contract rights created in extended days or extended year.

Extended day compensation shall be provided for certain approved, certified employees who provide additional support services related to instructional, curricular activities which extend beyond the regular approved school day. Extended day services are performed yearly or by semester based solely at the discretion of the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall have the final determination as to an individual's eligibility. Documentation of extended salary time and responsibilities will be maintained at the school site and shall be reported as required.

Contract Periods

The system fiscal year begins July 1 and ends June 30 of the succeeding year.

The teacher work year begins with the first day of pre-planning and ends per the work year calendar established by the Board of Education. For teachers the first pay period is at the end of September and the last pay period is at the end of August of the succeeding year. New teachers to the system may have their pay extended out over a 13-month pay period for the first year of employment. This will give the employee a payroll check at the end of August. This pay cycle is also applicable to most other positions in the system with a few exceptions.

Copyright

Employees are prohibited from unlawfully copying or distributing copyrighted material, including software, database files, documents, articles, or other information regardless of the source. This also includes information downloaded from the Internet. Absence of a copyright mark does not mean that the material is not copyright protected. Failure to observe copyright laws may result in disciplinary action. Any question about copyright issues should be directed to the school media specialist.

Criminal Background Check (BCBOE Policy GAK (1))

A criminal record check will be conducted at or prior to employment on every person who is employed by the Board of Education for the first time to fill either a full-time or part-time certified or classified position with this School District. This requirement also applies to persons who attend to students pursuant to their duties as volunteers for the school system.

For initial hiring purposes, the employee either shall be fingerprinted or shall provide a signed and notarized consent on a form designated by the School District, including the employee's full name, address, social security number and date of birth, based upon the requirement of state law or applicable rule or regulation. A clearance certificate verifying a satisfactory criminal background check may be required based on the requirements of state law and rules of the Professional Standards Commission.

Subsequent criminal record checks will be conducted on all personnel in accordance with state laws, state board rules, and rules of the Professional Standards Commission. All certified personnel whose employment is continued with this School District shall have a criminal record check made upon any certificate renewal application to the Professional Standards

Commission. All classified employees whose employment is continued with this School District shall have subsequent criminal record checks on a periodic basis, not to exceed every five years, using procedures and schedules to be determined by the Superintendent or designee.

Direct Deposit

Employees are expected to sign up to have their payroll checks deposited directly into a bank or credit union account(s) of their choosing. The employee may sign up for direct deposit through the Payroll Office. There is no charge for this service.

Electrical Appliances

The use of microwaves, coffee makers, hotplates, fans, refrigerators, lamps, etc., in instructional areas is prohibited, unless otherwise approved by the building principal. Microwaves, refrigerators and coffee makers are allowed in school-designated areas such as teacher workrooms.

Emergency Closing of Schools

Under emergency situations created by extreme weather or other conditions, it may become necessary to close schools. The Superintendent or designated representative will make the decision to close schools or to adjust schedules. The decision will be made as early as possible and will be announced on as many local and social media sources as possible. Additionally, schools will activate their phone chains and automated systems (where available) will be programmed with closure announcements. Employees usually must make up any days missed from the closing of school because of contract requirements.

Evaluations

All certificated personnel shall be evaluated annually. When an employee's performance has been less than satisfactory, the Board expects the evaluator to take corrective action, including a plan of improvement for the employee as appropriate or, if necessary, demotion, dismissal, or non-renewal of the employee's contract.

The annual evaluation program for teachers will comply with state requirements.

All classified personnel shall have their performance evaluated at least annually by an appropriate supervisor or administrator. All such performance evaluation records shall be part of the personnel evaluation file and shall be confidential.

Garnishments

Salaries of employees of the school system shall be subject to garnishments as covered by laws regulating garnishments. However, employees are expected to handle their financial obligations properly and not get into a situation where creditors take garnishment action.

Health Examinations

The Board has the authority to require a health exam of an applicant or employee to provide reasonable evidence that the employee is free from communicable disease and has the physical ability to fulfill the requirements of the position. Any employee whose condition of health is thought to be unfavorable to the welfare of students or other employees may be required at any time, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, to submit to a health examination by a physician or surgeon. The expense of such a required exam shall be borne by the Board. The report of such exam shall be made available to the Superintendent and shall include a statement by the examining physician as to any physical or mental condition noted likely to prevent the person examined from performing all duties and responsibilities of the position, or a statement that no such condition exists. All employees are urged to have complete annual health examinations for safeguarding of their health.

Hours of Work (BCBOE Policy GBRC)

All professional certified personnel shall work a minimum of forty hours per week. A normal work-day shall be considered as eight (8) hours. Realizing that teachers on many days far exceed the minimum of eight hours per day, all professional certified personnel at the schools shall report in accordance with schedules set by the principal.

School employees are expected to remain on school grounds during the workday unless otherwise specifically approved by the principal/supervisor or his/her designee. Employees must request and notify their supervisor if they must leave work early for any reason.

Specific duties to be performed by teachers include teaching, preparation for teaching, staff meetings, conferences with students and parents, planning conferences and related school activities in the community, and extra-class responsibilities, whether or not these fall into the hours during which the teacher is required to be on duty at his/her school.

From time to time, the supervisor may need to change individual work schedules to meet school or system needs. Notice of any change should be given as far in advance as possible.

Each employee is responsible for signing-in as instructed by their supervisor. A timesheet, sign-in sheet, or computerized data serves as record of the hours you are at work. Any addition, correction, or change on the sign-in sheet must be made between the employee and supervisor. Time records are the property of the Brantley County Board of Education.

Job Vacancies

When a vacancy or anticipated vacancy is recognized, system employees are notified through the district email user group. A certified position may also be advertised at www.teachgeorgia.org, and classified positions may be advertised in the local newspapers. Also, school and/or district administrators may participate in college/university job fairs when teacher vacancies are known. Current employees who are interested in a vacancy and feel they are qualified and can perform the essential job functions shall give written notice (email is acceptable) to the Principal or Director, of their desire to be considered for the position. There is no guarantee, explicit or implicit,

that the current employee will get the job or receive an interview. A current employee's interest will receive equal consideration as that of an outside system applicant.

Name/Address/Phone Changes

Each employee has the responsibility to keep the Payroll Office/Board Office informed of his/ her current mailing address and telephone number. To change a name for Brantley County records, a marriage certificate, court order, etc. is required. Address changes can be emailed to the payroll department.

Employees can change their name, etc. for their certificate online at the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.

Overtime for Classified Personnel *(BCBOE Policy GCRD)*

Overtime is defined as time worked over forty (40) paid hours in any payroll week, Sunday through Saturday, and is identified as either emergency or planned overtime. The forty (40) hours are defined as actual hours worked and do not include hours or days for which the employee was paid for leave time such as sick leave, personal leave, and annual leave.

Employees are not to perform overtime work or direct that overtime work be performed without the express written authorization of the Superintendent or his or her designee. Cases involving approval for overtime compensation shall be the result of emergency situations, limited timelines or when additional responsibilities are assigned to individuals on a temporary basis.

Compensation will be reimbursed at one and one-half the employee's regular rate of pay or compensatory leave at the same rate. Violation of this policy concerning prior approval for overtime work may result in disciplinary action against the employee, up to and including termination.

All classified employees who are considered "non-exempt" under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and are legally entitled to compensation for overtime work as provided by law and in accordance with this policy shall comply with any requirements of the District for documenting time actually worked and shall be responsible for ensuring the accuracy of such records.

An organization renting school facilities shall be informed that they will be obligated to pay any personnel costs incurred by the District pursuant to the renting of school facilities, including payment of hourly personnel costs and overtime compensation.

Employees shall be informed of the requirements of this policy on an annual basis. The Superintendent is authorized to develop and implement regulation to carry out this policy.

Pay Procedures

Salary is paid monthly per a schedule published by the Payroll Office.

Personal Safety

Staff members are advised to use wise care and judgment regarding their personal safety at all times while on school grounds and in school buildings. Employees should not stand in chairs, on tables, on stools, in or on desks, on counter tops, etc. Proper use of all equipment should be observed especially with items such as ladders, step stools, all electrical devices, and power and hand tools.

Personnel Records

Individual personnel folders are maintained at the central office. The folder includes but is not limited to:

1. Application for employment
2. Resume
3. Transcripts
4. Application for Certification
5. Evaluation information
6. Contracts
7. Certificates
8. Documentation of experience

Each principal shall maintain a Personnel File for each employee. It shall include but is not limited to:

1. Evaluation data
2. Conference Reports
3. Schedules/assignments

RECORDS CHECK

The Board of Education is cognizant of the importance of protecting the employees and students of the school system from employing persons who were known to have dangerous propensities.

Under the Georgia Records Checks for Persons Supervising Children Act of 1986 the Board has the authority to request a records check disclosing the nature and date of any arrest, charge, conviction of an applicant for violation of any law, except for motor vehicle parking violations, whether or not the violation occurred in Georgia.

Applicants considering employment or as a volunteer in this school system, who will have supervisory or disciplinary power over a child or children, will be asked to submit an affidavit consenting to a records check through the Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC).

The Board shall have no liability for defamation, invasion of privacy, or other claim based upon good faith action as provided for by state law. Any disciplinary action taken against an employee as a result of information obtained through a records check shall be governed by the provisions of O.C.G.A. 20-2-940 (Fair Dismissal Act).

Procedures for Handling Bodily Fluids

All employees of the school system shall exercise care in handling body fluids, regardless of whether infected persons are in attendance. Soiled surfaces shall be promptly cleaned with disinfectants, such as household bleach (diluted one part bleach to 10 parts water). Disposable towels or tissues shall be used whenever possible, and all cleaning equipment shall be disinfected after use. Those who are cleaning should avoid exposure to open skin lesions or mucous membranes to any body fluids.

Professional Personnel Lay-Off (BCBOE Policy GBKA)

The most important functions of the Board of Education are to employ personnel and manage resources within the limitations defined by the funding sources of the school system.

Consequently, it shall be the prerogative of the Board of Education (hereinafter the "Board") to abolish job positions, to reduce the length of the work year and salary (hereinafter "to downgrade") and/or to reduce the number of employees when seeking to cope effectively with program changes or financial exigency.

REASONS FOR REDUCTION IN FORCE (HEREINAFTER "RIF")

The Board shall consider a reduction in the professional work force to include the abolition of job positions, the downgrading of an employee's position, and/or the reduction of the number of employees, as a response to the following:

A decrease in student enrollment in the School District which would necessitate a decrease in personnel or a discontinuation of programs;

A change in state or local curriculum, personnel, or financial practices which would necessitate a change in or elimination of programs or services provided by the School District;

A loss of funds due to a reduction in state funds, reduction in local funds or other funds that make necessary a reduction in spending;

A lack of funding for programs, personnel, or services provided by the School District;

Any reasonable reorganization plan, to include the elimination of programs or services, to achieve a more efficient School District.

APPLICABILITY OF POLICY

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to extend to any employee substantive or procedural rights not required under state law. Specifically, nothing in this policy shall extend to professional personnel any expectation of re-employment or due process rights greater than are available under state law. This policy is not to be construed to mandate the promotion, transfer or reassignment of an employee to any other position with the School District, even though the employee who is to be terminated or non-renewed may be qualified or certified for a higher or other position.

RIF PROCEDURE

When the Superintendent determines that the application of this reduction in force policy is necessary, it shall be his or her responsibility to prepare for presentation to the Board of Education a plan for the reduction in force (RIF).

In proposing the plan, the Superintendent may: (1) determine the group(s) of employees

to which the RIF will be applied, (2) select individuals or positions to be subject to the RIF, or (3) any combination of (1) and (2). The primary factor to be considered by the Superintendent in devising a RIF plan shall be the performance of the educator, one measure of which may be student academic performance; provided, however, that this provision shall not apply if the board of education eliminates an entire program. Other factors to be considered may include, but shall not be limited to, the professional expertise, effectiveness, professionalism, performance of duties and responsibilities, relationship with students, parents and staff, tenure status, level of certification, fields of certification, and length of continuous service with the Board, number of successful years in public education, performance of extra responsibilities, and performance of extracurricular responsibilities.

NOTICE AND HEARING PROCEDURES

If the Board accepts the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Superintendent shall notify any employee affected by the application of the plan in a manner consistent with the provisions of Georgia law and he or she shall have whatever rights the Fair Dismissal Act provides for such employee.

When a termination or nonrenewal is to be based solely on O.C.G.A. § 20-2-940(a)(6), the basis for the employment action will be the necessary reduction in staff and not the performance issue of the employee.

Resignations

Certificated personnel who, for any reason, intend to resign or who intend to retire are encouraged to indicate their plans to their supervisor as early in the school year as possible. Resignations become effective at the end of the school year in which they are submitted.

Resignations requested to become effective earlier than at the end of school year require a release from contract by the Board and must be considered on an individual basis.

Resignations are to be submitted in writing with a signature to the supervisor.

Employees are required to return all Board of Education property and keys to their supervisor prior to the effective date of resignation. The Board may withhold the employee's final paycheck if such property is not returned in proper condition by the effective date of a resignation. Further, access to all computer systems shall be terminated no later than the date of resignation.

Exceptions to computer access may be considered on an individual basis. Such requests shall be made to the Technology Director.

Classified employees are considered "at-will" employees and as such may be terminated at any time from their employment with the school system. Any classified employee is requested to give at least a two-week notice if they intend to resign from their position.

Salary Addendum

Addenda to salaries for extra-curricular and extra duty assignments shall be executed as soon as possible during the school year for those employees assuming these responsibilities. There is no promise or guarantee of a particular extracurricular or extra duty assignment from year to year. Additionally, the principal and/or athletic director will

recommend to the Superintendent who in turn will recommend to the Board of Education the revocation of such an assignment when it is believed to be in the best interest of students or the school program. If such a revocation occurs or if the employee is released from the responsibility, appropriate salary adjustments will be made. Compensation for these assignments is generally divided out over the course of the entire contract period.

Salary Schedules

Experience and training are used to determine the correct placement on the current salary schedule. Placement on the Brantley County School District pay schedule is determined by actual number years of allowable experience per Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-5-2-.05. One hundred twenty full-time employment days or more equals one year as related to movement on the salary schedule.

For classified personnel, the Board uses a salary schedule based upon related experience and job position. Also, certain CTAE/permit certified teachers are credited on the salary schedule based upon experience related to the content.

It is the employee's responsibility to check the accuracy of their contract and/or compensation information (from YOSS) and report to the Payroll Office any discrepancies or questions. Failure to report such to the Board of Education within the contract year will constitute a waiver of any claim or request for salary adjustment on the part of the employee.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

The School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, or sex in its employment practices. It is the policy of the Board of Education to comply fully with the requirements of Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) and all accompanying regulations..

System ID Badges/Safety Alert Badges

All employees are to wear their system-issued ID badges and Safety Alert badges during work hours. This is for the safety and security of our students, staff, and schools. There may be a fee charged for anyone who loses or damages their ID or Safety Alert badges and needs replacement.

Tenure

The Brantley County School District provides no tenure rights except as provided in Georgia law [O.C.G.A.20-2-942]. Professional employees other than administrators whose contracts are renewed for the fourth consecutive year, or who had earned tenure in another Georgia public school system and had their contracts renewed for the second year with Brantley County Schools are considered tenured employees. Such employees may be dismissed or non-renewed only for reasons as specified in law. Tenure only guarantees certain fair dismissal rights as provided in law.

Transfers

Employees may request a transfer to another school and/or position for which they are certified and qualified. All transfers must be approved by the receiving principal/supervisor, the sending principal/supervisor, any Director as appropriate, and the Superintendent. A request for transfer does not obligate the system to transfer an employee.

Workplace Inspection

The Brantley County School District reserves the right to search any employee entering on its property or offsite while performing services or carrying out responsibilities of the school district, and to search property, equipment, and storage areas, including but not limited to, clothing, personal effects, vehicles, buildings, rooms, facilities, offices, parking lots, desks, cabinets, briefcases, lunches and toolboxes. Any items an employee does not wish inspected should not be brought to work.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Cafeteria Plan and Flexible Spending Accounts

The Brantley County Board of Education may participate in a federally sponsored “cafeteria plan” for fringe benefits for all employees. The plan provides that deductions for certain selected benefits made from the monthly salary before federal taxes, state taxes, and social security are computed. The result is a savings to the employee which results in more take-home compensation each month. Each employee must provide written authorization for entry into this program.

Flexible Spending Accounts also enable employees to pay certain non-reimbursed health, dental, and vision expenses and dependent care expenses with pre-tax dollars.

Employees can set aside designated amounts and file claims for reimbursement. The proper membership forms must be completed and submitted to the benefits office to establish eligibility.

Insurance

Employees who work 17.5 hours or more per week are eligible for benefits. Some plans are funded entirely or in part by the Board and others are available to employees via payroll deduction. All insurance coverage begins the first day of the month following the completion of one full calendar month of service, subject to the described conditions in the insurance plan.

Available Voluntary Benefits:

Health Insurance is offered by the Brantley County Board of Education through the State Health Benefit Plan. Several health insurance options are available with varying premiums. In addition to premiums paid by employees, the Board contributes \$1,195-\$1,885 (depending on position and calendar year) per month for employees enrolled in state health.

Dental Insurance is available for the employee, employee and spouse, employee and children, or the entire family. Variable plans allow you to determine the level of benefit that best suits your family. The Brantley County Board of Education contributes \$11

monthly to an employee's premium.

Life Insurance is also available for the employee and their dependents.

Disability Insurance is available to protect income on a short-term or long-term basis.

Accident Insurance is available to supplement basic health insurance benefits to help pay for miscellaneous out-of-pocket expenses related to an accident.

Cancer Insurance is available to supplement basic health insurance benefits to help pay for miscellaneous out-of-pocket expenses for cancer related treatment.

Vision Insurance is available to supplement basic health insurance benefits to help pay for miscellaneous out-of-pocket expenses for eye and vision care.

Additional Insurances maintained by the Board:

Workers' Compensation Insurance Employees may be entitled to Workers' Compensation benefits if injured on the job. The injury must arise out of and in the course of employment during the normal workday and work year. Injured employees must notify the school nurse or administrator immediately and complete appropriate forms in a timely manner. The injured employee must go to one of the physicians approved by the Workers Comp Insurance Company for treatment. A list of approved physicians is posted in each school system facility.

Professional Liability Insurance The Brantley County Board of Education carries a professional liability insurance policy (\$1,000,000 limit) on all employees at no cost to the employee.

Open Enrollment

Open enrollment is the only time you can make changes to your insurance without a qualifying event. There are two open enrollment periods throughout the year for the various insurances/benefits. The first is in November and pertains to your health insurance. The November open enrollment is the only time you can make changes to your health insurance. The second open enrollment period pertains to all other benefits. Open Enrollment for all your "other benefits" is typically scheduled during February/March. Please monitor your email for important announcements regarding open enrollment. If you believe you have a qualifying event, please contact the Board in a timely manner for additional guidance/procedures.

Social Security

Certified employees and secretaries/bookkeepers of the Brantley County Board of Education are not covered by Social Security.

Tax Sheltered Annuities

Tax Sheltered Annuities (TSA) are available to all employees. VALIC –The Variable Annuity Life Insurance Company, Value Teachers, American Fidelity, and Horace Mann are the TSAs offered through the school system.

Teachers Retirement System (TRS) of Georgia

Individuals employed one-half time or more as a teacher, administrator, paraprofessional, clerk, or secretary are required to become members of Teachers

Retirement System (TRS) as a condition of employment. Members must contribute the required rate (currently 6%) of earnable compensation as a payroll deduction to TRS. The Brantley County Board of Education currently contributes an additional 21.91% per employee to TRS.

TRS members must complete at least ten (10) years of service in Georgia public schools to be vested and eligible to receive TRS benefits. Full retirement is at 30 years. With full retirement, employees are eligible for retirement at 60% of the average of their two highest salary years. Each additional complete year of service constitutes an addition of 2% in TRS earnings up to 80% total. Unused, earned sick leave can also be used as credit toward service for retirement.

Temporary Employees

Temporary employees are not eligible for Board provided or optional benefits such as insurance, except Workers' Compensation.

EMPLOYEE ABSENCES AND LEAVE

Regular attendance and punctuality are considered essential requirements for all positions in the school system. While even the most conscientious employee occasionally finds it necessary to miss work, unnecessary absences are to be avoided. Principals, department heads and immediate supervisors are expected to monitor their employees' attendance and take appropriate action when attendance problems occur. Leave is permitted only as specified in Board policy and subsequent procedures. It is in the best interest of the students and the educational process that all personnel be present at their assigned duty stations for each scheduled workday. Employees are warned that falsifying information on leave reports, including claiming personal disability or illness when no such disability or illness exists, constitutes fraud and may be used as grounds for disciplinary action. Falsification of leave or improper use of leave may be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including reporting to the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) and/or termination of employment.

Employees working less than a 240-day work year begin earning eligible leave in September each year, and leave is earned through June 30 of the following calendar year. Each benefits-eligible employee of the Board shall be allowed to earn sick leave, with full pay, computed on the basis of one and one-fourth (1 1/4) working days for each completed month of service. For a 190 day employee, a total of 12.5 days may be earned per year. Employees may use up to 5 accumulated sick days for personal or professional leave (must be approved 1 week prior to absence by principal or director). To clarify, personal days are not in addition to the 12.5 but are part of the 12.5.

Authorized Unpaid Medical Leave

An employee who does not have sufficient accumulated paid sick leave or vacation to cover medical absences may request unpaid medical leave. If granted, unpaid medical leave shall not exceed one contract year or assignment period. Such leave may be granted only when said leave is not covered under existing policies governing leaves and absences and in the opinion of the Superintendent or his/her designee does not interfere with the effective operation of the school system. All available leave must be exhausted before unpaid leave will be authorized.

Medical certification may be required for illness or disability leave.

Leave (BCBOE Policy GARH)

See BOE Policy GARH for Leave definitions.

Family Medical Leave (BCBOE Policy GBRIG)

It is the purpose of this policy to set out in summary form the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act ("the Act" or "FMLA") and its implementing regulations. The Board of Education ("Board") does not intend by this policy to create any additional rights to leave not provided by the Act; provided, however, the Board does wish to extend the rights of the Act to certain employees who have worked at least 12 months for the Board. The Board does intend to elect certain options as the Act authorizes. Any portion of this policy inconsistent or contrary to the Act is unintentional and shall not be given effect. As to the interpretation of this policy, the Board's employees should look to the Act itself and its regulations.

Parental Leave

The Board of Education shall make paid parental leave equally available to all eligible employees of the Board of Education under the following terms:

1. An employee of the Board of Education shall be eligible for paid parental leave for qualifying life events upon satisfying the following criteria:
 - a. The employee is classified as full-time by the District and is eligible to participate in the TRS (Teacher Retirement System of Georgia) or the PSERS (Public School Employees Retirement System); and
 - b. The employee has six continuous months of employment with the Board, regardless of whether he or she is eligible for paid or unpaid leave under federal law. An employee paid on an hourly basis must have worked a minimum of 700 hours over the six-month period immediately preceding the requested paid parental leave date.
2. A qualifying life event means:

The birth of a child of an eligible employee;

 - a. The placement of a minor child for adoption with an eligible employee; or
 - b. The placement of a minor child for foster care with an eligible employee.
3. The maximum amount of paid parental leave that may be taken by an eligible employee during a rolling 12 month period is 240 hours, regardless of the number of qualifying life events that occur during such period.

The rolling 12 month period shall be measured backward from the date an eligible employee first uses parental leave.

 - a. Parental leave may be taken as needed and may be taken in increments of half or full days.
 - b. Any unused paid parental leave that remains 12 months after the qualifying

event shall not carry over for future use.

- c. Unused paid parental leave shall have no cash value at any time of the eligible employee's separation from employment with the Board of Education.
4. Paid parental leave under state law shall run concurrently with any leave provided under federal law.
5. Eligible employees requesting paid parental leave must submit the district's designated form to the Superintendent or designee at least 30 school days in advance of the requested leave start date.

Maternal Birth Leave

In accordance with Georgia law, eligible full-time employees who give birth are entitled to **120 hours of paid Maternal Birth Leave** following a qualifying birth.

Eligibility

- Employees must have completed **six (6) continuous months of employment** with the District before the qualifying birth.
- Hourly employees must have worked at least **700 hours during the six (6) months immediately preceding** the requested leave.
- A qualifying life event is the birth of one or more children in a single or multiple pregnancy.

Use of Leave

- Maternal Birth Leave must be used **during the three-week period immediately following the birth** for the purpose of recovery.
- This leave shall be taken **before** any paid parental leave provided by the District.
- Unused Maternal Birth Leave has **no cash value** and will not be paid upon separation from employment.

Request Procedure

1. Employees should notify their immediate supervisor and the Human Resources Department as soon as practicable of the anticipated need for leave.
2. Employees must complete any required District leave request forms.
3. The District may require documentation verifying the qualifying birth in accordance with applicable law and District procedures.

Coordination with Other Leave

- Maternal Birth Leave will be administered in accordance with applicable federal and

state laws and District procedures, including any determination regarding concurrent use with leave available under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), when applicable.

The District prohibits interference with an employee's lawful use of Maternal Birth Leave and prohibits retaliation against an employee for exercising rights provided under this policy.

Field Trips

Employees supervising field trips for students under their direct supervision and responsibility are not required to request leave.

Sick Leave Bank (*BCBOE Policy GARHA*)

Brantley County Board of Education provides for a Sick Leave Bank for all employees to utilize after their accumulated sick leave days have been exhausted. The Sick Leave Bank shall be active provided there is minimum participation of at least 33% of eligible employees.

Employees who elect to participate shall contribute one (1) day from their accumulated sick leave account to the Sick Leave Bank. Each member will be assessed an equal number of additional days of sick leave at such time as the bank is depleted to sixty (60) days. Employees may withdraw sick leave days only within the guidelines established by the Sick Leave Bank Committee and in accordance with Board Policy and Regulations. If a member has not accumulated sick leave at the time of assessment, he or she must voluntarily donate the first sick day earned or withdraw from the Sick Leave Bank program.

Sick leave days may be withdrawn for reasons as outlined under O.C.G.A. 20-2-850.

Unauthorized Leave

Unauthorized leave is defined as non-performance of those duties and responsibilities assigned by the school system and its representatives including all duties and responsibilities as defined by statutes, rules, and regulations of the State Board of Education, policies of the Board, and administrative regulations of this school system. Such unauthorized leave may include, but is not limited to, refusal to provide service; unauthorized use of disability, personal, professional, family, vacation, or other board provided leave; non-attendance at required meetings; failure to provide supervisory functions at school-sponsored activities; and absence from work by an employee during a suspension of his/her certificate by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission whether consensual or not. An employee on unauthorized leave may be deemed to have abandoned his/her contract of employment and be terminated.

Verification of Leave

Employees anticipating an absence from duty which requires pre-approval must submit the request in a timely manner as required by system regulations. All required

documentation and follow up reports are the responsibility of the employee and are necessary for the absence to be qualified as "Authorized Leave." The Superintendent or the supervisor of the employee may require a physician's or other verification as to an employee's claimed reason for any absence. Medical certification may be required for illness or disability leave.

Communicable Disease (BCBOE Policy GANA)

An "infectious disease" means an illness due to an infectious agent or its toxic products which is transmitted directly or indirectly to a person from an infected person or animal. The Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent or designee to develop and implement procedures related to the impact of infectious diseases on school system management and operations. Such procedures shall be consistent with the requirements of the Georgia Board of Education Rule 160-1-3-.03 and shall require the following actions:

The annual provision to employees of information, education or training related to transmission of infectious diseases, risk reduction and standard precautions, based on guidelines or recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The immediate notification of the person, or if the person is a minor, to the parent or guardian, of the need to obtain an appropriate medical evaluation where there exists reasonable suspicion that an employee or student has an infectious disease.

The involvement of the school nurse, public health agency representatives, health care professionals, and school system administrators in operational decisions concerning an employee or student who has an infectious disease.

TECHNOLOGY USE

All staff members shall be required to acknowledge the parameters outlined for appropriate and acceptable use of technology.

Responsible behavior by individuals given access to system technology and equipment is essential and mandated by the Board of Education. In addition to the policy requirements included below, Georgia law, O.C.G.A. §16-9-90 (Georgia Computer Systems Protection Act) provides definitions, criminal liability and penalties for crimes related to computer theft, computer trespass, computer invasion of privacy, computer forgery, and computer password disclosure. Commission of a computer crime under this law carries the possible penalty of a fine not exceeding \$50,000 and/or incarceration for a period not to exceed one year. Property laws covering theft, vandalism, destruction and copyright also apply to computing resources. The Brantley County School District also complies with the Children's Internet Protection Act.

Definition

Computing resources include, but are not limited to, mainframe, servers, switches, mini and microcomputers, as well as peripherals, networks, software, data, labs,

computer-related supplies and the Internet, a world-wide telecommunications network with hundreds of resources.

General Computing Policies

1. Intentional abuse of computing resources, intentional interference with the operation of computing resources, intentional interference with the work of other users, violation of confidentiality, copyrights, or license agreements, and intentional wasting of computer resources is prohibited.
2. Actions which attempt to circumvent prescribed channels of obtaining computer privileges and resources are prohibited.
3. Changing wiring, connections, or placement of computing resources is prohibited.
4. Modifying any system configuration, startup files, or applications, without the explicit permission of the computer lab supervisor, media specialist, or Technology Department is prohibited.
5. Informing the media specialist or Technology Department of improperly working equipment or software is highly encouraged so that computing resources can be better maintained for efficient availability.
6. Using computing resources for commercial purposes is prohibited.
7. Adults or students may not use or download privately owned computer software on school computers.
8. In instances where teachers determine that student-owned or teacher-owned software may be advantageous to the instructional program, such software must first be brought to the attention of the appropriate curriculum staff and instructional materials selection committee for review and assessment. Student-owned or staff-owned software shall not be permanently loaded or copied for use in school system computers.
9. Under no circumstance shall students, employees of the school system or any individual exhibit or disseminate obscene materials on school property by computers or any other means.

Internet Safety (BCBOE Policy IFBGE)

It is the policy of the Brantley County Board of Education: (a) prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (d) comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act.

Definitions

Key terms are as defined in the Children's Internet Protection Act.*

Access to Inappropriate Material

To the extent practical, technology protection measures (or "Internet filters") shall be used to block or filter access to inappropriate information over the Internet.

Specifically, as required by Children's Internet Protection Act, blocking shall be applied to

visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography, or to any material deemed harmful to minors.

Students must be supervised by staff when accessing the Internet for any purpose. Technology protection measures may be disabled or, in the case of minors, minimized only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes. See BOE Policy IFBGE for further Definitions and Information on CIPA.

Internet Acceptable Use

Purpose of Internet service:

The purpose of the INTERNET service is to provide students and employees access to the INTERNET to: 1) enhance delivery of education; 2) provide access to career and professional development activities; 3) allow for limited high-quality self-discovery.

The purpose of education is to prepare students for success in life and work in the 21st Century.

- a. Students must learn what actions are appropriate on a limited purpose network as compared to what actions might be appropriate through a general personal account.
- b. District employees have an obligation to use the district system in a manner specified by their employer.

Specifically, the System supports resources that will enhance the learning environment under directed guidance of the school staff. Therefore, students' access to and use of the INTERNET at school will be under staff direction and will be monitored, as is any other classroom activity.

Limited Access Level:

The level of access for students and employees is limited as set forth in the purpose of INTERNET service. The use of the INTERNET will reflect on the district; therefore, employees and students are to guide their activities accordingly.

Moving / Transferring Technology Equipment

Computers and computer equipment are not to be moved from one location to another without the express permission and consent of the Technology Department.

Social Media

All staff members are strongly cautioned about their use and participation in any and all social media sites including, but not limited to, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, etc. Social Media is a valuable resource, but unfortunately it can also be used as a tool for inappropriate behavior and communication. If you allow pictures and comments to be posted about you or about others, those things are then known to the world and it is impossible to

retract them once they are in the public mind. *Certainly, educators are cautioned about their use of these sites because of the potential liability issues involving students.*

Software

Employees may not install any software on the school system's technical resources without express prior permission from the Technology Director. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety and integrity of the system's technology and prevent computer viruses, as well as meet our obligation under applicable software licenses and copyright laws. Additionally, employees may not copy software from system technology for personal use.

Use of E-mail

1. Messages should be short, coherent, and to the point.
2. Be professional at all times in regard to tone, humor, and correct grammar and spelling.
3. All e-mails are the property of the Brantley County School System. Employee email accounts will be suspended within 1 month upon an employee's separation from the district. It is the responsibility of the employee to inform the technology department if there is need to keep an account open.
4. Individual emails may be monitored by authorized personnel.
5. The system email should not be used to send sensitive/confidential information.
6. System e-mail is designed for professional, job-related use. Employees are encouraged to have and use a personal email account for personal use.

CERTIFICATION

Certificate Responsibility

Professional employees must possess a valid, in-field Georgia certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC). The system must have on file the most recent, valid certificate from each certificated employee. Failure to keep a current certificate may be grounds for termination or non-renewal of contract. An employee with a non-renewable certificate must take appropriate and necessary steps to change the certificate to a Clear Renewable Certificate as soon as possible. Failure to secure a Clear Renewable Certificate may constitute grounds for non-renewal or termination.

It is each employee's responsibility to know the status of his/her certification and to keep current all provisions including requirements to renew the certificate. Important aspects in this responsibility are: infield provisions, expiration date, requirements for renewal, and procedure for renewal. Neither the Brantley County Board of Education nor its staff accepts responsibility for omissions regarding an individual's certificate. The school system, through the Office of the Assistant Superintendent, will assist teachers with certification questions and issues. The school system reserves the right to not recommend a teacher for certification renewal and is under no obligation to request any certification waiver from PSC rules or requirements.

Professional Qualifications

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Georgia OCGA 20-2-2065, state certification can be waived for most teachers, meaning that each LEA that waives certification must establish Professional Qualifications (PQ) for their teachers.

LEA's must report information on the qualifications of teachers including out-of-field.

To ensure that Brantley County School System teachers meet Professional Qualifications and In- Field requirements, BC Schools require certification or the GaDOE accepted equivalent, or the pursuit of said certification or equivalent, in instances of deficiency. Not completing needed certifications or equivalents in a timely manner set by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission may constitute grounds for non-renewal or termination.

Paraprofessionals employed by Brantley County Schools must meet one of the following criteria: Have completed at least two years (60 semester hours) of college **or** possess an associate's degree or higher **or** have passed the GACE Paraprofessional Assessment.

Questions regarding Professional Qualifications should be directed to the Assistant Superintendent.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The purpose of professional learning activities is to enhance the capabilities of staff members in order to provide educational services to the students. Professional learning also is designed to address deficiencies of school system personnel as identified through the annual personnel evaluation process and to meet other identified needs.

The school system has an appointed professional learning advisory committee to ensure that the activities provided meet the assessed program needs of the school system. The composition of the committee will include representation from each of the schools of the system.

Each school should have a professional learning committee assigned the task of evaluating professional learning activities and developing a written plan for the school.

Professional learning activities must be approved by the building Principal or Director (SNP, Transportation, Maintenance, and Technology) and the District Professional Learning Coordinator prior to the employee attending any professional learning activity. Failure to receive written prior approval (submission of the Brantley County Leave Form) from the building Principal/ Director and the district Professional Learning Coordinator will result in the employee not being allowed to attend the professional learning activity. If an employee attends an event without prior approval, the employee will not receive professional learning credit from the district, reimbursements will not be made for travel/ meals or registration fees, and the employee may face other disciplinary actions.

Expense Reimbursement

Reimbursement of necessary travel expenses relating to professional learning activities may be authorized by the Superintendent or his/her designee. A travel voucher must be submitted to the business office by way of the local school bookkeeper for reimbursement. In general, state regulations regarding travel reimbursement limits and appropriate documentation will be applied to the expense statement. Certain funding sources may preset limits on expenditures, and these limits shall apply. Prior approval of expenditures is necessary from the employee's principal/ supervisor or his/her designee.

Professional Organizations

Employees are encouraged to consider membership in professional organizations and associations which support the goals and philosophy of the school system. Automatic payroll deduction is available for membership dues to PAGE (Professional Association of Georgia Educators) and GAE (Georgia Association of Educators). Contact the Payroll Office about payroll deductions.

STUDENTS

Child Abuse (*BCBOE Policy JGI*)

All employees of the Brantley County Board of Education, as well as persons who attend to a child pursuant to their duties as a volunteer for the school system, who have reason or cause to believe that suspected child abuse has occurred shall notify the principal or the school system's designee, who shall report such abuse immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe that suspected child abuse has occurred, in accordance with Georgia law and the protocol for handling child abuse cases for Brantley County, Georgia.

Under no circumstances shall the principal or designee to whom a report of child abuse has been made exercise any control, restraint, modification or make any other change to the information provided by a mandated reporter, although the reporter may be consulted prior to the making of a report and may provide any additional, relevant and necessary information when making the report.

Classroom Environment

The teacher is expected to ensure that students are not destructive of school property, including books, materials, equipment, and furnishings. Classrooms should be kept neat and clean.

Discipline

It is the purpose of the Brantley County School District to operate each school in a manner that will provide an orderly process of education and that will provide for the welfare and safety of all students who attend schools within the district. In accordance with that purpose, the Brantley County Board of Education has adopted a policy that requires students to respect each other and school district employees, to obey student behavior policies adopted by the Board and to obey student behavior rules established at each school within the district.

The primary goal of the Brantley County Schools is to educate, not to punish; however, when the behavior of an individual student comes in conflict with the rights of others, corrective actions may be necessary for the benefit of that individual and the school as a whole. Accordingly, students shall be governed by policies, regulations and rules set forth in the Code of Conduct found in the Brantley County Schools' Student Handbook.

The Code of Conduct is effective during the following time and in the following places:

- At school or on school property at any time;

- Off school grounds at any school activity, function or event and while traveling to and from such events;
- On vehicles provided for student transportation by the school system.
- While waiting for or departing from school transportation

A teacher shall have the authority, consistent with local board policy, to manage his/her classroom, discipline students, and refer a student to the principal or his/her designee to maintain discipline in the classroom. Study of individual differences, conferences with student and parent, and assistance from the school administration and specialists within the school system should be the teacher's first thought in attempting to help a student correct behavior patterns which may delay his/her own development and which may interfere with the rights of others.

The principal or assistant principal shall respond when a student is referred by a teacher. The administrator shall employ appropriate discipline management techniques that are consistent with local board policy and with the intent of changing the behavior. Once a teacher refers a student to the office for discipline, the matter is then left to the professional judgment and discretion of the administrator to deal with the student in the manner he/she feels most appropriate given all circumstances.

Teacher Authority to Remove Students from Classrooms: A teacher shall have the right to remove from his or her class a student who repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in the class or with the ability of the student's classmates to learn, where the student's behavior is in violation of the student code of conduct, provided that the teacher has previously filed a report with the principal or the principal's designee or provided that the teacher determines that such behavior of the students poses an immediate threat to the safety of the student's classmates or the teacher.

False Accusation

A student shall not falsify, misrepresent, omit or erroneously report information regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a school employee toward a student. Such false accusations are prohibited both on and off school grounds and hours. Employees specifically aware of such accusations should report it to the principal immediately.

Investigations and Searches

The Board of Education endeavors to provide a safe and secure environment for all students. The Board authorizes reasonable searches of students directed to that end by authorized school officials. Searches based on reasonable suspicion may proceed without hindrance provided that students are not arbitrarily stripped of personal privacy. The principal of each school, or his/her authorized representative, possesses the authority to conduct inspection of student's school lockers or articles carried upon their persons. Such search shall be based on a reasonable suspicion of the presence of deleterious items. Examples of deleterious items shall include, but are not limited to, secreted noisemakers, water guns, contraband drugs, a handgun, other dangerous weapons, or tobacco products. Principals of each school where lockers are issued shall ensure that at the time lockers are made available to students, it is clearly specified in writing that lockers are subject to inspection and

search by school officials. Each school shall maintain duplicate keys or records of all locker combinations, and avoid any practices which lead students to believe that lockers are under their exclusive control. In the event search of student's person, his/her personal possessions, or his/her lockers reveals the student is concealing material the possession of which is prohibited by federal, state or local law, local law enforcement authorities shall be notified so that they may take appropriate action.

Solicitations by Students

All school-related fund raising activities involving students must have the prior written approval of the principal and the Board.

Transportation

Employees are not to transport students in any vehicle other than system vehicles or only under authorized conditions.

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES (BCBOE Policy GAE)

SECTION 1. PURPOSE; INFORMAL RESOLUTION PREFERRED

It is the purpose of this policy to implement the provisions of O.C.G.A. 20-2-989.5 et seq. In accordance with the foregoing, it is the policy of the Board of Education that certified personnel shall have the rights to present and resolve complaints relating to certain matters affecting the employment relationship at the lowest organizational level possible. The Board of Education encourages all employees to resolve their complaints informally in a spirit of collegiality where possible. This policy and procedure is available where such efforts do not succeed.

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS

- a. "Level One Administrator" means the principal of a school with respect to teachers and other certificated personnel assigned to that school. With respect to the certified Administrators supervised by the Superintendent, the "Level One Administrator" shall be the Superintendent. In any case not covered by this paragraph the "Level One Administrator" shall be the supervisory certificated person designated by the Board or, in the absence thereof, by the Superintendent.
- b. "Central office administrator" means the local school system Superintendent.
- c. "Complaint" means any claim or grievance by a certificated employee of this school district which is filed pursuant to this policy and which comes within the scope of the policy.

SECTION 3. SCOPE OF COMPLAINT; EXCLUSIONS

- a. Scope -Unless excluded by paragraph (b) hereof, this complaint and grievance procedure is applicable to any claim by any professional employee certificated by the Professional Standards Commission who is affected in his or her employment relationship by an alleged violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of statutes, policies, rules, regulations, or written agreements of this school district or with which the district is required to comply.

- b. Exclusions- This procedure shall not apply to:
 - i. Performance ratings contained in personnel evaluations pursuant to Code Section 20-2-210;
 - ii. Professional development plans;
 - iii. Job performance;
 - iv. Termination, non-renewal, demotion, suspension, or reprimand of any employee, as set forth in Code Section 20-2-940;

The revocation, suspension, or denial of certificates of any employee, as set forth in Code Section 20-2-984.5;

- a. certified employee who chooses to appeal under Code Section 20-2-1160, shall be barred from pursuing the same complaint under this policy.

SECTION 4. HEARING RIGHTS; EVIDENCE; REPRESENTATION; DECISIONS; RECORDS

- a. Hearing; Evidence -The complainant shall be entitled to an opportunity to be heard, to present relevant evidence, and to examine witnesses at each level, but the complainant may not present additional evidence at the Second or Third Hearing levels unless notice of the Complainant's intention and the evidence to be presented are submitted in writing five (5) days prior to the hearing to the Administrator who will preside at such level, and in the case of the local board, to the Superintendent. When hearing an appeal from a prior level, the local Board of Education shall hear and decide all appeals de novo.
- b. Representation -The complainant and the administrator against whom the complaint is filed or whose decision is appealed shall be entitled to the presence of an individual, including an attorney, to assist in the presentation of the complaint and the response thereto, at the central office administrator and at the local Board of Education level. The presence of any individual other than the Complainant and the Administrator at Level One is prohibited, except witnesses who present testimony or documents.
- c. Hearing Officer -The local Board of Education may appoint a member of the State Bar to serve as law officer who shall rule on all issues of law and other objections, but such attorney shall not assist in the presentation of the case for either party.
- d. Overall Hearing Time Schedules -The overall time frame from the initiation of the complaint until rendition of the decision by the local Board and notification thereof to the complaint shall exceed sixty (60) days.
- e. Automatic Referral To Next Level -Any complaint not processed by the administrator or the local unit of administration within the time frame required by this policy shall be forwarded to the next level for determination.
- f. Records -Accurate records of the proceedings at each level shall be kept; the proceedings shall be recorded by mechanical means; all evidence shall be preserved and made available to the parties at all times; and all costs and fees shall be borne by the party incurring them unless otherwise agreed upon by the parties; except that the cost of preparing and preserving the record of the proceedings shall be borne by the local Board of Education; provided however, the cost of transcribing the transcript of evidence and proceedings before the local board shall be borne by the party requesting same, and all costs of the record on appeal to the superior courts and appellate courts shall be paid by the party required to do so by the laws relating thereto.
- g. Decisions -Each decision shall be made in writing and dated, and shall contain

findings of fact and reasons for the particular decision reached.

- h. Notice -The decision at each level shall be delivered to the complainant by a person designated by the Superintendent, either by (1) being hand-delivered; (2) being deposited in the U.S. Mail (certified mail, return receipt requested), or (3) sent by statutory overnight delivery. Notice to the Complainant shall be deemed to have been made on the date of hand delivery or on the date of deposit with a delivery service or deposit in the U.S. Mail by certified mail, return receipt requested to the address stated in the complaint or, if not contained in the complaint, to the last known address of the Complainant on file with the Board of Education.

SECTION 5. FIRST LEVEL; PRESENTATION; TIME; CONTENTS

The complaint shall be presented in writing to the Level One Administrator within ten (10) calendar days after the most recent incident upon which the Complaint is based. The complaint shall include the following:

- The mailing address of the Complainant to which all notices and other documents may be mailed;
- The intent of the Complainant to utilize this complaint procedure, clearly stated;
- A reference or description of the statute, policy, rule, contract provision or regulation that is alleged to have been violated, misinterpreted or misapplied;
- A brief statement of the facts reasonably calculated to show how such statute, policy, rule or regulation was violated or misapplied, and how it substantially affects the employment relationship of the Complainant.
- A statement of the relief desired.

The Superintendent shall prepare forms for use in accordance with the foregoing requirements.

SECTION 6. FIRST LEVEL HEARING AND DECISION

The Level One Administrator shall record the date of filing on the complaint, and shall give notice to the Complainant of the time and place of the hearing, either by mail or hand delivery. When notice is given by mail, it shall be sent by first class mail to the address set forth in the complaint. If no address was included in the complaint, then the notice shall be sent to the last known address of the Complaint on file with the Board of Education. The Level One Administrator shall conduct a hearing on the complaint and render a decision thereon within ten (10) days of the filing of the complaint. The decision shall be dated and a copy shall be sent to the complainant as provided in Section 4 above.

SECTION 7. SECOND LEVEL; APPEAL FROM FIRST LEVEL TO CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

A complainant dissatisfied with the decision of the first level shall be entitled to appeal to the Central Office Administrator by filing written notice of appeal with the Office of the Superintendent. The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the Complainant is notified of the Level One decision. The Central Office Administrator shall record the date of the filing on the appeal and shall notify the Complainant in writing of the time and place of the hearing by mail or hand delivery. The Level Two Administrator shall obtain copies of all minutes, transcripts, documents and other records relating to

the complaint and shall conduct a hearing and render decision within ten (10) calendar days of the date of the filing of the appeal, or the hearing may be conducted by any designated representative of the Level Two Administrator who shall promptly submit his or her recommendations and findings to the Level Two Administrator for final decision. The decision shall be rendered and served on the Complainant and his attorney in accordance with Section 4 (h).

SECTION 8. THIRD LEVEL; APPEAL TO BOARD OF EDUCATION

A Complainant or Level One Administrator dissatisfied with the decision of the Central Office Administrator may appeal to the Board of Education by filing written notice of appeal with the Office of Superintendent. The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the date of the decision as provided in Section 4. The Superintendent shall record the date of filing on the appeal and shall promptly give notice to the Complainant in writing of the time and place of hearing by mail or by hand delivery.

The Complainant and the Administrators against whom the complaint is filed or whose decision is being appealed shall be entitled to appear before the Board of Education and be heard. The Board of Education may direct that a pre-hearing conference be held prior to the hearing to identify issues and facilitate presentation. The local board shall conduct a hearing and render its decision in writing within twenty (20) calendar days after the hearing, and perfect service thereof on the Complainant and his attorney, all in accordance with Section 4 (h).

SECTION 9. APPEALS TO STATE BOARD

Appeals from the decision of the local Board of the State Board of Education shall be governed by the State Board Rule (BCAEA) governing appeals and OCGA 20-2-1160.

SECTION 10. REPRISALS PROHIBITED

No certificated personnel shall be subjected to reprisals as a result of filing any Complainant under this policy. Any reprisals may be referred to the Professional Standards Commission.

SECTION 11. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING DISCLAIMER

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to permit or foster collective bargaining.

SECTION 12. REPEALS

All policies and parts of policies in conflict here with are repealed.

FRAUD PREVENTION POLICY *(BCBOE Policy DIE)*

Purpose:

To promote and ensure the reporting of suspicion of fraudulent activity, the Brantley County Board of Education provides employees, clients, vendors, and individuals with confidential channels to report suspicious activities. The Brantley County School System shall not tolerate fraud of any kind, and has established a system for the reporting of suspicious activities.

Definitions:

Fraud is defined as a false representation of a matter of fact, whether by words or by conduct, or by concealment of that which should have been disclosed, that is used for the purpose of misappropriating property and /or monetary funds from federal, state, or local grants and funds.

Any and all reports of suspicious activity and/or suspected fraud shall be investigated. The Brantley County School District will thoroughly and expeditiously investigate any reported cases of suspected fraud to determine if disciplinary, financial recovery and/or criminal action should be taken.

Confidentiality:

All reports of suspected fraud shall be handled under the strictest confidentiality. Only those administrators directly involved in the investigation should be given any information. Informants may remain anonymous but should provide as much detail and evidence of the alleged fraudulent act as possible.

Staff Responsibilities:

Employees who suspect that financial fraud, impropriety or irregularity has occurred shall report those suspicions to their immediate supervisor and/or the Superintendent/designee, who shall have the primary responsibility for initiating necessary investigations. Investigations shall be conducted in coordination with legal counsel and/or other internal or external departments or agencies as appropriate.