

**AMITE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
2011-2012 School Year**

Amite County Elementary School



Student/Parent Handbook

*The Mission of the Amite County School District is
to Educate ALL Students*



Message from the Superintendent

On behalf of the Amite County School District, I wish to welcome all of you back to school. I hope each one of you had an enjoyable summer break and are looking forward to beginning a new school year. The beginning of a school year is a time for each student to set goals and establish attitudes and routines that build the foundation for a successful school year. I am confident that each one of you will put forth your best efforts toward establishing those goals and observing school rules and regulations to provide a strong foundation toward reaching your highest potential.

I hope your experiences in the Amite County School District will be rewarding and that each of you will take advantage of learning to your highest potential. The extent of your learning will be dependent upon your hard work toward acquiring the academic skills and personal qualities you will need in order to excel throughout the school year. I urge you to not only strive for academic excellence, but to also work hard to develop personal skills that will prepare you to interact successfully with your peers.

This student handbook is designed to provide you and your parents with school rules and regulations for the 2011-2012 school year. All rules and regulations included in this handbook pertain to in-school, after-school, summer programs, riding on school buses, and all school sponsored events. In the event that incidents originate off the school campus, but later effect the safety and well being of students and employees on campus, school buses, or at school sponsored events, the rules and regulations described in this handbook will apply.

The Amite County School District recognizes the importance of a positive relationship with parents and the community. We believe that a strong relationship among the school, parents, and members of the community is the foundation of an educational system that can best accommodate all the educational needs of the students in Amite County. We will continue to strive to build even a stronger relationship between our schools and our community.

I wish to express my appreciation to all administrators, teachers, and parents who worked together to produce this student handbook. I commend you for the time and effort you devoted and your dedication in developing this student handbook.

Deborah B. Hopf
Superintendent of Education

SPECIAL NOTES

It is the responsibility of parents and students to familiarize themselves with this handbook. Please read this handbook together and complete the signature page in the back of the book. Return the signature sheet to the school after you have completed reading the handbook and by the deadline requested by the principal. **Signatures will serve as verification that the persons whose names appear on the signature page understand the policies and regulations described in this handbook.**

Although all sections of the handbook are important, it is extremely important that all students and parents read carefully the district policies regarding graduation requirements, promotion and retention, attendance, drug testing, student discipline and dress code. Any questions should be referred to the school principal.

Amite County Board of Education
P.O. Box 378
Liberty, Ms. 39645

AMITE COUNTY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Superintendent of Education	Deborah B. Hopf
Curriculum & Testing Coordinator	Robbie Robertson
Special Education Program Supervisor	Rebecca Roberts
Federal Programs Director	Mary L. Russ
Director of Food Services	Angie Bateman
Technology Coordinator	Reginald Matthews
Transportation Director	David Dixon

AMITE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

Mr. James Copeland	President
Mr. James Burns	Vice-President
Mr. Albert White, Sr.	Member
Dr. Diane Cook	Member
Ms. Monica Z. Johnson	Secretary

DIRECTORY OF SCHOOLS

Amite County High School 600 Irene Street Liberty, Mississippi 39645 (Phone) 601-657-8920 Principal: Robert McDaniel	Amite County Vocational Complex 1501 Irene Street Liberty, Mississippi 39645 (Phone) 601- 657-8081 Director: Augustus Russ
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Amite County Elementary School
3457 Greensburg Road
Liberty, Mississippi 39645
(Phone) 601-657-8311
Principal: William K. Brabham

AMITE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

District Vision and Mission Statements

The Vision of the Amite County School District is to become a STAR School District.

The Amite County School District has as its mission to Educate ALL Students.

DISTRICT GOALS

Goal 1: Increase Student Achievement

Goal 2: Increase Community Involvement

Goal 3: Increase Graduation Rate



NOTICE

DRUG FREE SCHOOLS

The Amite County School District resolves to have the most Drug Free School environment possible. The District and School Board, through its administration and the assistance of local law enforcement, will vigorously seek out those who use, sell or come to school under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Students who violate the School District Policies in regard to use, possession, or sale of drugs will be subject to the strongest discipline to include alternative school placement, expulsion, and reporting of an unlawful act to the local law enforcement agency.

The District reserves the right to conduct drug searches on a regular basis in all schools in the district and on all district property.

AMITE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Student Complaints of Bullying or Harassing Behavior

Students and employees in the Amite County School District are protected from bullying or harassing behavior by other students or employees. It is the intent of the Board and the administration to maintain an environment free from bullying and harassing behavior. This complaint procedure provides a process for filing, processing and resolving the complaints of such conduct. Adherence to these procedures is mandatory. The failure of any person to follow these procedures will constitute a waiver of the right to pursue a complaint at any level, including review by the Board.

1. Definitions

Bullying or harassing behavior is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, or any act reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic that (a) places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property, or (b) creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits.

A "hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior.

Bully or harassing behavior will not be condoned or tolerated when it takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus, or when it takes place off school property when such conduct, in the determination of the school superintendent or principal, renders the offending person's presence in the classroom a disruption to the educational environment of the school or a detriment to the best interest and welfare of the pupils and teacher of such class as a whole.

2. Procedures for Processing a Complaint

Any student, school employee or volunteer who feels he/she has been a victim of bullying or harassing behavior, or has witnessed or who has reliable information that a student, school employee or volunteer has been subject to bullying or harassing behavior shall report such conduct to a teacher, principal, counselor or other school official. The report shall be made promptly but no later than five (5) calendar days after the alleged act or acts occurred. The school official shall complete a "Bullying/Harassing Behavior" complaint form which shall include the name of the reporting person, the specific nature and date of the misconduct, the names of the victim of the misconduct, the names of any witnesses and any other information that would assist in the investigation of the complaint. The report shall be given promptly to the principal or superintendent who shall institute an immediate investigation. Complaints against students, teachers, or school staff shall be made to the principal or direct supervisor. Complaints against the

principal shall be made to the superintendent and complaints against the superintendent shall be made to the Board chairman.

The complaint shall be investigated promptly. Parents will be notified of the nature of any complaint involving their child. The District official will arrange such meetings as may be necessary with all concerned parties within five (5) working days after initial receipt of the complaint by the District. The parties will have an opportunity to submit evidence and a list of witnesses. All findings related to the complaint will be reduced to writing. The District official conducting the investigation shall notify the victim and parents as appropriate when the investigation is completed and a decision regarding disciplinary action, as warranted, is determined.

If the victim is not satisfied with the decision of the District official, he/she may submit a written appeal to the superintendent. Such appeal shall be filed within ten (10) working days after receipt of the results of the initial decision. The superintendent will arrange such meetings with the victim and other affected parties as deemed necessary to discuss the appeal. The superintendent shall provide a written decision to the victim's appeal within ten (10) working days.

If the victim is not satisfied with the decision of the superintendent, a written appeal may be filed with the Board. Such appeal shall be filed within ten (10) working days after receipt of the decision of the superintendent. The Board shall, within twenty (20) working days, allow the victim and parents as appropriate to appear before the Board to present reasons for dissatisfaction with the decision of the Superintendent. The Board shall provide a written decision within ten (10) working days following the victim's appearance before the Board.

AMITE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK School Year 2011-2012

Notification of Rights Under FERPA for Elementary and Secondary Schools

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. A copy of these rights may be requested from the Amite County School District’s Administrative Office at 533 Maggie Street, Liberty, Mississippi or viewed on the District’s website (www.amite.k12.ms.us).

Emergency Closing of Schools

The Superintendent of Education, in the event of an emergency, death or sickness of an employee or employees, or for any other necessary cause, is authorized to close all schools in the system. The Superintendent may close schools or dismiss schools early in the event of hazardous weather conditions or other emergencies that threaten the safety or health of students and employees in the district. Make up days shall be set at the discretion of the Amite County Board of Education in order to meet the requirements of days schools are required to be in session. Emergency closings will be announced on the District’s AIM Parent/Student Notification System as soon as information is available. In addition, school closings will be announced on the following television and radio stations.

McComb	K-106FM (same as WAKH) Wapf-105.7-AM WHNY
Natchez	WTYJ-98.6FM WQNZ-95.1FM
Baton Rouge	Q106-FM 105.7AM WBRZ-Channel 2 Television WAFB-Channel 9 Television
Jackson	WLBT-Channel 3 Television

Messages will be relayed on these stations as soon as possible, in most cases around 6:00a.m. and periodically thereafter.

District Grievance Policy and Conflict Resolution

Grievance Procedures

The grievance procedures described in this policy shall apply to all grievances filed by parents or guardians on behalf of the student; therefore, “grievant” shall be described as the parent or guardian for the purpose of this policy.

Grievances shall be processed in accordance with the following procedures:

LEVEL ONE

1. All grievances must be presented orally to the principal within five (5) days of the act or omission complained of, and the principal and the grievant shall attempt to resolve the matter informally.
2. If the grievant is not satisfied with the action taken or the explanation given by the principal, the grievant shall within five (5) days after meeting with

the principal file a written statement with the principal explaining in detail how the grievant claims to have been discriminated against. This written statement shall contain, in addition to the above, the time, the place and nature of the alleged act and/or a statement of the federal law or board policy allegedly violated. The statement must be signed by the grievant.

3. In the event the grievant does not submit to the school principal a written statement as defined in step 2, failure to do so shall be deemed as an acceptance of the informal decision rendered by the principal.
4. After receipt of the written statement setting forth how the grievant was allegedly discriminated against, the principal shall hold a hearing and render a decision in writing to the grievant within ten (10) days.
5. The written decision of the principal shall be deemed to be accepted by the grievant unless the grievant notifies the superintendent in writing within five (5) days of the written decision of the grievant's intention to appeal the written decision of the principal.

Level Two

1. Upon receipt by the superintendent of the written notice that the grievant intentions to appeal the decision of the principal, the superintendent shall notify the grievant within five (5) days and shall advise the grievant of the date and time upon which the matter will be considered by the superintendent. The superintendent shall schedule a hearing on the matter no later than ten (10) days from the date of receipt of the grievant's written notice of intention to appeal the principal's written decision.
2. Upon completion of the hearing, the superintendent shall render a decision in writing to the grievant within ten (10) days of the hearing.
3. The written decision of the superintendent shall be deemed to be accepted by the grievant unless the grievant notifies the superintendent in writing within five (5) days of the written decision of the grievant's intention to appeal the superintendent's written decision to the School Board.
4. Within five (5) days after the receipt of the grievance for appeal to the School Board, the Board secretary, in concert with the president and superintendent, shall schedule a hearing before the School Board to hear the grievance.
5. The School Board shall render its decision in writing within seven (7) days of the hearing.

Family Safety Information

The safety of each student is a primary concern of the Amite County School District. The school district has spent considerable time and effort planning and practicing safety and security measures appropriate for dealing with major critical incidents. Every school has a school crisis management plan. Administrators, teachers, staff, and students are required to participate in appropriate training in preparation of a variety of potential crises. The school district works closely with local law enforcement, the Emergency Management Agency, and other public safety departments to provide a safe environment for students.

We ask our families for support and assistance with our safety plan. At the beginning of the school year, review the student handbook with your child (children). Make sure they know the expectations the school has for academic and social behavior. Talk to your children about the things they like at school, as well as the things that may cause them some concern. Talk to school personnel about these concerns so that they may be addressed. During the year, you may hear your child (children) discussing various drills that take place on the school campus. We regularly participate in fire and weather drills, as well as lockdown and evacuation drills. It is important that you provide the school with up-to-date phone numbers and addresses, as well as vital medical information. In the event that a crisis should occur at school, please be aware of the following procedures:

- Tune into the media or radio stations listed on page 8 to obtain information about school closings and possible evacuation sites.
- Please do not call the school. We will need to keep communication lines open for emergency responders.
- Please do not come to the school unless instructed to do so by the media. It is important to keep roadways clear for emergency responders.
- If the school is in lockdown, students will stay on campus in secure classrooms. Teachers and school personnel are trained to respond to lockdown procedures. No one will be allowed to enter the school building during a lockdown. If the school must be evacuated, students will be evacuated to an alternate location, which will be released to you through media sources.
- No student will be released until all students are accounted for and the superintendent authorizes the release.
- No student will be released until the authorized parent or guardian signs him/her out of school.

It is important that you trust and work closely with your school and emergency personnel in the event of a crisis so that these individuals can accurately implement the procedures that they have been trained throughout the year to perform. Thank you!

Operation of the School District on a Non-Discriminatory Basis

The Amite County School District offers educational/vocational opportunities on a non-discriminatory basis in compliance with the requirements of the following federal civil rights legislation Title VI, Title IX, the Vocational Amendments of 1976 and 1979, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Public Law 108-446 of 2004. Further, the Amite County School District offers equal educational and employment opportunities to all persons without regard to sex, race, religion, color, national origin, age, or disability. Upon request, a copy of the Amite County School District Board of Education's policy regarding compliance with these federal legislative mandates may be obtained from the Office of the Superintendent or any other school district administrative office.

The Amite County School District will not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access to, or employment in its programs and activities or in treatment of the individual to the extent provided by law.

Mrs. Rebecca Roberts, District Special Education Supervisor, has been designated as the Section 504/Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator and will handle inquiries regarding the Amite County School District's nondiscrimination policies, the filing of grievances, and the requests for copies of grievance procedures covering discrimination on the basis of disability. She may be reached at (601) 657-9174.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination against persons with a handicap in any program receiving federal financial assistance. No discrimination against any person with a disability will knowingly be permitted in any of the programs or practices of the school district. To ensure the district's compliance with Section 504 as it applies to students with handicaps, the district has adopted specific

policies regarding procedures in the event an individual wishes to file a complaint or grievance. This established procedure is available to the public upon request and is posted in all administrative offices.

Title VI

The Amite County Public Schools are in compliance with the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (race, color, and national origin). Questions may be directed to Mary Russ (Local Title VI Officer of Compliance.) Grievance procedures are on file in the Superintendent's office.

Title IX

The Amite County School District is committed to compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972. The School District's Title IX Compliance Officer is Mr. G. H. (Robbie) Robertson. His address is P.O. Box 378, Liberty, Mississippi 39645. His office is located at 533 Maggie Street, Liberty, Mississippi. He can be reached by telephone at (601) 657-4361. Refer to the Amite County School District Title IX Grievance Procedures that follow in the event that you wish to file a possible inequity in respect to the School District's sports offerings.

Title VI & Title IX Grievance Procedures

1. When any person believes his or her rights under Title VI or IX have been violated, he/she must state in writing the nature of the complaint with the title VI or Title IX compliance officer who will respond to said complaint with ten (10) school days.
2. If the complaining party is not satisfied with the Title VI or Title IX Compliance Officer's response, the complaining party may appeal in writing to the Superintendent of Education within ten (10) school days.
3. The Superintendent of Education will respond to the complaining party's appeal within ten (10) school days.
4. If the complaining party is not satisfied with the Superintendent of Education's response, the complaining party may appeal in writing to the Amite County Board of Education within ten (10) days.
5. The Amite County Board of Education will make a final decision on the complaint at the next regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting.

The School Day for District Schools

The following time schedule for school days shall be followed in the schools in the school district in accordance with the varying class schedules and bus route plans:

<u>School</u>	<u>Class Begins</u>	<u>Class Ends</u>
Amite County Elementary School	7:50am	3:00p.m.
Amite County High School	7:43am	2:57p.m.
Amite County Vo-Tech	8:00am	2:05p.m.

A student is tardy to school if the student arrives any time after the tardy bell for first period or after the student's first class begins. A student who is tardy to school MUST be accompanied by parents/guardians and report to the appropriate office before going to his/her assigned class. For high school students who are tardy and drive to school, parents MUST be contacted in reference to the student's tardy before he/she is allowed to report to class. Student must obtain a written class admission slip from the principal's office before being allowed to proceed to class. The admission slip must be signed by the teacher and returned to the principal's office by the end of the school day. The reason for the tardy is recorded in the student database for further reference. Failure to comply with these procedures shall result in an unexcused absence. A high school student who has been tardy to school for three days shall lose his/her privilege to drive a personal vehicle on campus.

**Residency Requirements of Students
Attending Amite County School District
and Residing with Persons Other Than Their Natural Parents**

1. All students registering to attend a school within the district, beginning January 4, 1993, if not being registered by a natural parent must submit proof of legal guardianship that verifies that the student is residing with an Amite County guardian prior to being registered.
2. Two legal proof of residency in Amite County must be submitted each year as a criterion for continued enrollment in the Amite County School District.
3. If a student is registered by a single, divorced or remarried parent, proof of legal custody is required prior to registering a student beginning January 4, 1993.
4. All registration forms must contain a written description of where the student resides, such as the residence description required by the Amite County 911 emergency services. Registration forms must also be accompanied by a copy of the student's birth certificate, proof of required immunizations, and a copy of the student's social security card.

Entrance and School Records

Students, when entering the Amite County School System from another district, must complete an entrance form available at the guidance counselor's office. If the student is from an out of state school district he/she must present an immunization record and a certified birth certificate. If the student is transferring into Amite County School District from a school accredited by a state or regional accrediting agency, an official transcript mailed directly from the office of the school previously attended will be required. A report card or transfer papers from the previous school attended may be used for temporary class placement. In the event the student is transferring from a non-accredited school or in the event transcripts are not available, then the student will be given achievement tests and /or special subject tests to determine grade and /or subject placement.

In the event a pupil transfers from one school to another school within the same school district, the same permanent record shall be transferred to the new school. If a student transfers to another school district the same permanent record shall be kept permanently in the school district from which the pupil transferred.

An accurate cumulative record shall be maintained for every child enrolled in the public schools. No one but authorized school personnel, parents, and legal guardians shall have access to the cumulative record without a subpoena or the written permission of the student and his parent(s) or legal guardian. Written parental/guardian objection to the accuracy or authenticity of data recorded in the cumulative record shall become part of the record upon request of parents, legal guardians, students, former students, and/or bona fide educational institutions.

Students who transfer from a non-accredited school or from a home school setting must be given a placement test within thirty (30) days of enrollment. A copy of the test summary shall become part of the student's permanent record.

Enrollment of Students

In order for a student to enroll in the Amite County School District, the student's parents or guardians must provide the information listed below. Upon receipt of this information, the school administration will make the appropriate classroom assignment.

1. Two proofs of child's residence in accordance with the Student Verification of Residency Policy and state law.
2. A CERTIFIED birth certificate for the student.
3. A proper immunization report issued through the family physician or through the health department.

4. Evidence of the student's social security number.
5. A student who does not live with a parent must present official documentation as to guardianship status. Failure to present the required documents at the time of registration will result in the student being denied enrollment.

The student must have reached the age of five (5) on or before September 1 of the year of enrollment in order to enroll in the district's kindergarten program. In order for any child to enroll in first grade, the child must have reached the age of six (6) on or before September 1 of the year of enrollment.

Residence with Legal Parent/Guardian Affidavit Required

Any new student entering the Amite County School District must reside with his/her natural parent(s) or a court-approved legal guardian who resides in the Amite County School District. Any student who meets the requirements of "Homeless" shall be referred to the Superintendent of Education to determine if the student meets the legal requirements for a "Homeless Affidavit of Residency". Any student who is considered "Homeless" in accordance with Federal law shall be enrolled immediately upon completion of the "Homeless Affidavit of Residency" forms.

Verification of Student Residence Required

The Mississippi State Board of Education adopted a verification of student residency policy on April 20, 1990. The definition of student residence for school attendance purposes is that the student physically resides full time, weekdays/nights and weekends, at a place of abode located within the limits of the school district. This policy requires that all school districts absolutely verify a student's residence for determination as to whether the student may legally attend a school in the district.

The Amite County School District must verify residency on each student to be enrolled. Post office box numbers are not acceptable for verification purposes. A street address must be provided. Two current proofs of residency are required. Home visits may be necessary to verify residency. **Please note that new proofs of residency are required at the beginning of each school year regardless of how many years a student has been enrolled in the district.**

Acceptable documentation for proof of residency is listed below.

1. Filed homestead exemption form
2. Lease agreements
3. Driver's license
4. Automobile registration within school district
5. Tax receipts
6. Mortgage documents
7. Utility bills
8. Voter Registration Card
9. Other official documentation

Any student whose residency is not cleared through the district using the proper procedure as adopted by the State Board of Education shall be denied enrollment. When questions arise regarding a student's legal residence, the school may request additional confirmation of information in order to meet the requirements of state law.

Requests for Transfer Out of the School District

In accordance with the Mississippi Code of 1972, the parents of any student who meets the following requirements shall be allowed to appeal to the Amite County Board of Education for a transfer to the closest school district bordering Amite County:

- 1 The student resides more than 30 miles as measured by the bus route from the school he/she is scheduled to attend.
- 2 One or both parents of the student for whom the transfer request is made is employed in an instructional capacity in another surrounding district.

Any other requests for transfer for special circumstances must be appealed to the Amite County Board of Education. Parents must follow appropriate procedure for requesting to be placed on the Board agenda.

Students Transferring into the School District

Any student transferring into the Amite County School District must provide sufficient proof of residency in accordance with the Student Verification of Residency Proof. Additionally, students must meet the requirements of state law as they pertain to transfers. All transfers from out of the district must be approved by both the Amite County Board of Education and by the board of the student's home district according to law.

The district does not accept students from schools or programs (including tutorial, home-study, or correspondence) that are not accredited by the state or regional agency without first administering standardized tests and/or special tests to determine proper placement of students and/or the validity of Carnegie units being presented for graduation. The district office should be contact regarding transferring students and the appropriate *Application for Transfer* must be completed.

The Amite County School District does not accept students who have been expelled from another school district until such time as the expulsion period assigned by the other school/district has ended. Any student transferring into the Amite County School District who was in an alternative school program in the transferring district will automatically be placed in the Amite County School District alternative program until such time as the Amite County School District can make a decision as to proper placement.

Tuition Payment for Transfer of Students into the District who Reside out of the District

Parents/guardians of students who have been approved to transfer into the Amite County School District under the provisions and procedures set forth in Section 37-15-31 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated, as amended, shall be required to submit a tuition payment to the Office of the Superintendent at the beginning of each school year or at the time the student is approved to attend the Amite County School District.

The tuition requirement shall not apply to those students who live out of the district but who attend the Amite County School District and whose parent(s) are employed in an instructional capacity in the Amite County School District or those students who meet the 30 mile rule as described in the provisions of Section 37-15-31 of Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated as amended.

Transfers and Proper Withdrawal from School of Attendance

When a student transfers either from the Amite County School District, he/she must properly withdraw from the school he/she is leaving. Withdrawal shall be processed through the principal's office and all books, fines, or other obligations that the student has with the transferor school must be cleared before the student will be considered properly withdrawn. The withdrawal form must be signed by the student's parent/guardian, teachers, the librarian, and the principal before the student can be officially withdrawn.

Student Change of Address or other Personal Information

The importance of emergency information of each student cannot be over-emphasized. The school must have accurate access to a student's home address, name of responsible parties, and telephone numbers where those parties may be reached at any time when the student is at school. Parents must notify the school when there is a change of address or any change in the above-stated information.

School Records

Transcripts of student records will be released to other agencies if students (of legal age) or parents sign a written request from such release to be made and/or according to state law and/or federal regulations. A student or his/her parent(s) or legal guardian(s) may view his/her personal school record upon request made to the appropriate school principal. Any corrections needing to be addressed may be presented to the principal in writing and will be considered for correction. In the event of student transfer, a student's transcripts or records will be forwarded to the receiving school upon receipt of a proper request from the receiving school.

Section 9528 of the ESEA, 20 U.S.C § 7908, as amended by the NCLB, and 10 U.S.C.503, as amended by § 544 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 (Pub.L. No. 107-107), require LEA to:

- **Give military recruiters the same access to secondary school students as provided to postsecondary institutions or to prospective employees; and**
- **Provide students' names, addresses, and telephone listings to military recruiters when requested, unless a parent has opted out of providing such information (Military Recruiter Guidance is on FPCO website.)**

A student and his/her parent(s) or legal guardian have the right to file a legal complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School District to comply with the requirements of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

**Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605**

Copies of School Records

The Amite County School District's policy for assigning fees for the photocopying and mailing of student records is as follows:

- Photocopying-\$5.00 per request;
- Actual cost of postage assessed for all mailed records;
- All fees payable prior to processing records requested.

This policy excludes all graduating seniors for a period of one year following their graduation date. Fees are subject to change by the Amite County School Board.

If a student is transferring to another school, educational records shall be forwarded by the Guidance Office upon request of the school in which a former student seeks enrollment. There is no fee assigned to students for the forwarding of records to another school.

Child Nutrition Program

The goal of the Child Nutrition Program is:

- To provide free meals to all students under the Provision 2 Program
- To create menus which provide students with approximately one-third of the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA), which includes a variety of offerings student will like and eat.

The Amite County School District, in compliance with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations has adopted the following policies in connection with the Child Nutrition Program:

- **Closed Campus-** Students are not allowed to leave school during their lunch break, or are they allowed to send for other purchased food items during lunch. This includes any food related events held prior to 1:00p.m.
- **No Carbonated Beverages** (packaged in any form) are allowed in the cafeteria under any circumstances by students or adults.
- **Any extra sales offered from the Child Nutrition Department as defined by USDA are any food items which are nutrient dense, or a part of the daily menu requirements;**
- **Milk/milk products (ice cream) and other food products over and above the regular lunch menu items must meet USDA standards and are the only extra sales items sold to students without the purchase of a school meal in the elementary and secondary schools.**
- **Extra sales for elementary/high school students are allowed only after a meal is obtained (in accordance with USDA Standards).**
- **All adult who choose to purchase meals in the cafeteria shall pay for each meal on a daily basis.**

THE FOLLOWING POLICIES ARE STRICTLY ENFORCED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AMITE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT WELLNESS POLICY:

- Purchase of food/snacks shall take place only after breakfast and one hour prior to lunch and one hour after the last lunch period is over. This applies to class celebrations also.
- Health nutrient dense food selections are strongly encouraged for snacks, party foods, fundraisers, and all food sales.
- The sale of candy is discouraged, since it is unhealthy.
- All foods sold must be nutrient dense.

Payment Procedures

- Personnel checks are discouraged.

Note:

- Checks may be accepted on an emergency basis only. If a check is returned from the bank for any reason, the check will be re-deposited one time only.
- All checks returned for the second time will result in the loss of check payment privileges.
- Any NSF checks must be cleared in a timely fashion or the check will be turned over to the bad check unit of the district Attorney's Office.

Guidance Programs

The district's guidance program is part of the total educational process. School counselors hold the philosophy that all individuals are important, that they are responsible for their own behavior, and that they can plan for their future when given specific assistance. The counseling process takes place between counselor and students in both individual and group sessions intended to result in increased insight, self understanding, and behavior changes. **Guidance/counseling services are available in schools in the**

Amite County School District. School District counselors are assigned to schools to help students with personal, educational, or vocational needs. Information is kept confidential.

School Visitors

Parents and school patrons are encouraged to visit the schools; however, such visitations must be appropriate and properly scheduled. Teachers are allocated time to meet with parents and parents should contact the principal or assistant principal if they desire a conference.

When a parent is contacted for a conference pertaining to academic or behavioral concerns, it is the parent's responsibility to attend the conference in order to benefit the child's progress. (Section 37-11-53). Classroom visits by school age students shall not be allowed in any of the county's school buildings. All persons wishing to visit a school or specific classes must report to the school's administrative office upon arrival and receive proper clearance. Excessive visitation is discouraged.

Library Rules and Regulations

1. The Amite County School libraries are open daily up to ten minutes after the school day.
2. Students must present a library pass upon entering the library during the school day.
3. Books are due two weeks from the date they are checked out.
4. A fine of 5 cents per day will be assessed for each overdue book. A student will not be able to check out any other materials from the library until the fines for his/her overdue books have been paid.
5. Reference books may not be checked out for home use. On written request from teachers, reference books may be checked out for classroom use.
6. Only two books per student may be checked out at any one time. Exceptions will be considered for special assignments.
7. If a student destroys a book, the student will be responsible for refunding the district for the replacement cost of the book.

Daily Announcements

In order to avoid as few interruptions to classes as possible, all announcements will be made at the beginning of the school day and the end of the school day immediately before dismissal.

Students with Disabilities Programs

In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), programs for students with disabilities are based on the philosophy that every child be provided the opportunity to participate in a program that is planned, adopted, and conducted with the training and opportunity needed to assume a meaningful place in society. Special programs are designed to equip each student with the attitudes, skills, abilities, and knowledge that make it possible for students to develop individually. Questions regarding these programs should be directed to Mrs. Rebecca Roberts. The department phone number is (601) 657-9174.

AMITE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Student Handbook
2011-2012

CURRICULUM
Grades K-6

The basic curriculum of Amite County Elementary School (Grades K-6) shall consist of reading/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, and physical education. Instruction in the arts and writing are incorporated into the curriculum in the regular daily class instruction.

The Amite County Elementary School curriculum consists of the competencies included in the Mississippi Department of Education Frameworks for each subject area. After the competencies have been taught, teachers record mastery and provide additional interventions and enrichment as needed.

Classification of Students

Kindergarten

Students who are five (5) years old on or before September 1st of the current school year shall be classified as Kindergarten students. As specified in Mississippi Code, students who do not meet this age requirement will not be allowed to be enrolled in Kindergarten. **(Students who attend Kindergarten in a public school in the state of Mississippi may be recommended for Kindergarten retention if the teacher and principal of the school in which the student is enrolled in Kindergarten determine that first grade would not be the appropriate educational placement for that student. Following a review of the mastery level of the Kindergarten curriculum, the principal shall notify the parents of students who are to be retained in Kindergarten.)**

First Grade

Students who are six (6) years old on or before September 1st of the current school year shall be classified as first-grade students. As specified in Mississippi Code, students who do not meet this age requirement will not be allowed to be enrolled in first grade.

Second through Sixth Grades

All students who have successfully completed the requirements for promotion from the previous grade shall advance to the next grade in accordance with the *Promotion and Retention* requirements that follow in the next section.

Promotion and Retention

Student performance on the essential objectives must be used as the principle basis for determining whether a student passes to the next grade or is retained in his/her current grade. The following is the promotion and retention policy for elementary student in the Amite County School District:

- Successful completion of a course shall be based upon (1) a grade of 70 (D) or higher as the final grade in the course based on the grade-level framework, and (2) mastery of the essential objectives (state and local).
- Student promotion from grade to grade shall be determined annually, at the end of the regular school year. The final report card shall indicate to the parent(s) and student whether the student has been promoted to the next grade level or retained in the current grade.

Specific Requirements for Promotion and Retention

Kindergarten

Kindergarten retention will be recommended for any student who, in the teacher and principal's judgment, would benefit from another year in Kindergarten. Teachers, with the approval of the principal, have the authority to retain a student in Kindergarten for an additional year if the verification of the student's Kindergarten performance in relation to curriculum objectives deems that placement of the student in first grade would not be the most appropriate educational placement.

First and Second Grade

Students must master the State Core Curriculum and the district objectives in reading and mathematics with a minimum overall average of 70 (D).

Third through Sixth Grade

Students must master the State Core Curriculum and the district objectives in reading, language arts and mathematics with a minimum overall average of 70 (D). Students must also pass four (4) of the five (5) major subjects (reading, mathematics, language arts, science, and social studies) to be promoted to the next grade.

All third-grade students are expected to meet the benchmarks as set forth by the Mississippi Department of Education on the MCT2, which is given in May of each school year. Students who do not pass the minimum benchmarks, but have been promoted to the fourth grade, shall be recommended to the school's Teacher Support Team for review. This referral process must begin within the first twenty (20) school days.

Promotion and Retention Notification

Student promotion from grade to grade shall be determined annually, at the end of the regular school year. The final report card shall indicate to the parent(s) and student whether the student has been promoted to the next grade-level or retained in the current grade level.

Parents will be notified of the possibility and/or probability of retention. Students who do not master the reading, language arts, and mathematics requirements during the regular school term shall be given the opportunity to complete the work in an extended-year program during the summer, if funds are available. **However, participation in the extended-year program does not assure promotion.** Following the summer extended-year program, parents of students in attendance will be notified about their child's promotion/retention status. Grades earned during the summer program shall be averaged with the regular school year grades per subject. Students must obtain a minimum grade of 70 after the regular school year grades and summer grades are averaged in order to obtain credit for the course.

Promotion for Special Education students will be determined by the IEP committee. Promotion will be based on basic skill mastery, successful completion of the IEP, and attendance.

Grading System

The district curriculum is composed of state and district mandated objectives. All grades are based upon the percentage of these objectives that have been mastered. Letter grades will be obtained by using the scale below:

93%-100%	A
83%-92%	B
75%-82%	C
70%-74%	D
Below 70%	F

An "I" will be given for incomplete work. This grade should be removed during the following nine-week period or the grade becomes an "F".

- There will be four grading periods within each school year.
- All regular education students shall be assessed on the basis of grade-level work.
- In graded programs, a minimum of twelve (12) grades shall be recorded per subject/per grading period.
- Nine weeks tests shall be given at the end of each nine-week grading period.
- Students must take nine weeks tests at their regular scheduled times. In the case of an emergency or illness, the student shall be allowed to take his/her tests upon returning to school. In the case of any other pre-approved absence, the student shall take his/her tests on the day of return.

Nine-Weeks' Grade

Daily grades will count 3/4 and the nine-weeks' test grade will count 1/4.

Daily grades shall consist of credit given for classwork, homework, class participation, special projects, portfolios, and other forms of formal and informal assessments. Teachers are expected to grade work using the criteria of completeness, correctness, and neatness. Student effort toward positive success should be considered when grading classwork such as special projects, cooperative group activities, and portfolios.

Note: Grades awarded to students who have been ruled eligible for students with disabilities services and who are actively participating in the district's students with disabilities programs shall be based on the attainment of goals and objectives set forth in the student's IEP (Individual Education Plan). Students with disabilities who attend regular classes in order to attempt to receive Carnegie units and who are also attend special education classes shall be required to meet the same minimum standards in the regular education classes attended as regular education students who are in the class. Accommodations and/or assistance devices may be used as appropriate. (More information can be found in Appendix D of "Grading Graduation Policy for Students with Disabilities".) Contact person is Mrs. Rebecca Roberts.

Any student with disabilities who does not meet course requirements, even though adjustments have been made to accommodate the student's disability, may receive a failing grade (F). If it is obvious, however, that the student with a disability cannot function socially, emotionally, or educationally in a regular classroom program, then the student's IEP must be revised accordingly **before** the student is moved to a different setting. All decisions in regards to student placement must be made by the IEP team.

It is important to note that it may be necessary to provide extra assistance to disabled students or make modifications in the regular program of instruction. Regular education teachers and special education teachers must work closely together to insure that all appropriate educational methods, accommodations and modifications, and supplementary aids and services are being used to assist the student with a disability, and the student is placed in his/her least restrictive environment.

Alternate Grading, Accommodations, Modifications for Students with Special Needs

It is important that all school staff, students, and parents understand the definitions of two important terms to provide a more productive educational setting for students with disabilities. These terms are as follows:

“**Modifications** are changes in course content, teaching strategies, standards, test presentations, location, timing, scheduling, expectations, student responses, environmental structuring and/or other attributes which provide access for a student with a disability to participate in a course/standard/test which **FUNDAMENTALLY** alters or lowers the standard or expectations of the course/standard/test (Diana Browning Wright, Teaching and Learning, 2003).”

Modifications (changes to curriculum) should rarely be used for any student. If modifications are used for a student with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (I.D.E.I.A 2004) these should be included in the student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

“**Accommodations** are changes in course content, teaching strategies, standards, test preparation, location, timing, scheduling, expectation, student responses, environmental structuring and/or other attributes which provide access for a student with/without a disability to participate in a course/standard/test, which **DO NOT** fundamentally alter or lower the standard or expectations of the course/standard/test (Wright, 2003).” Any adaptation is allowed that does not change the course curriculum.

Final Grade

To pass a subject, students must maintain an average of 70% or above when the two semester grades are averaged. There will be no half-unit credits for high school courses in courses offered for a year. The school principal shall have the right to use his professional judgment to recommend approval of exceptions to the promotion policy in special circumstances in collaboration with the teacher or teachers who are responsible for awarding the grades for the student in question. **Final approval for any exceptions to the promotion policy must be given by the superintendent.** Consideration will be given based on grades, age, teacher recommendation, and special circumstances deemed to be beyond the student’s control. The superintendent shall inform the Amite County School Board of such decisions.

Exemptions from Exams

Students will not be exempted from mid-term exams at the first semester except in courses culminating at semester. A student may be exempted from final examinations if they have a semester average of 93 or higher.

Testing

Grades K-12 student achievement is a major priority of the faculty and administration of the Amite County School District. Testing is an important tool for gaining valuable information that will assist teachers and administrators in planning in all curriculum areas. Students in Kindergarten and first grade will be assessed at the beginning of the school year and again at the end of the school year in reading and math using an informal one-on-one assessment. The Mississippi Curriculum Test Second Edition (MCT2) is given to students in grades 3-8 in May of each year. The MCT2, which is designed to match the Mississippi Reading, Language, and Mathematics Frameworks, provides teachers with information to guide them in further planning of the curriculum and planning interventions for students who need additional help in one or more of the tested areas. If the school is selected through a random process, students in fourth and eighth grades will participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which is designed to compare the progress of students in the state and the nation to that of students in other countries throughout the world. In addition, fourth and seventh-grade students participate in the Writing Assessment in March of each year. The Writing Assessment provides information about students’ progress in the writing process,

which can be used to assist teachers in planning writing assignments in all subject areas. The Mississippi Science Test is administered in the spring of each year to students enrolled in grades 5 and 8 and to special education students receiving instruction on these two grade levels. The Mississippi Science Test is aligned with the *Mississippi Science Framework* and is administered for the purpose of gathering information to be used for the improvement of science instruction in compliance with *No Child Left Behind*.

Students who do not pass the minimum benchmarks on any area of the Mississippi Curriculum Test (Second Edition) for grades three and seven will be referred to the Teacher Support Team in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the district's **Intervention Process Policy**. This referral must take place within the first twenty (20) school days of the school year directly following the school year in which the student failed to meet the minimum benchmarks on of the MCT2.

Grades 9-12

Students in grades 9-12 shall participate in the following components of the Mississippi State Testing Program:

Students in grades 9-12 must pass all Subject Area Assessments. These include English II Multiple Choice, English II Writing, Algebra I, Biology I, and U.S. History. Subject Area Tests in Algebra I, U.S. History from 1877, Biology I, and English II Multiple Choice and Writing are scheduled by the Mississippi Department of Education. (*See School Calendar for testing dates.*) Students who are taking any of the SATP tested subjects will be scheduled to take each test during the spring administration of the year that they take the course. Students who do not pass a test during that spring testing administration will have the opportunity to retest each time the test is offered on the state testing calendar.

The Test of Basic Education (TABE) is offered each year in September to students enrolled in the Amite County Vocational-Technical Complex. The TABE is designed to measure the basic academic abilities needed for success in vocational education. Students identified as having particular weaknesses on the TABE are allowed to participate in the vocational school's related studies program, which is designed to assist students with the academic demands of their chosen trade. The Work Keys and MS-CPAS are administered in the spring to all vocational completers. It measures the level of performance on workforce competencies to ensure the quality of educational programs and maximize student achievement.

Students who enroll in the Amite County School District from a non-accredited school or from a home schooling setting are required to be tested within thirty days of enrollment. Students in grades 9-12 will be given the Test of Basic Education (TABE) on the student's appropriate grade/age level. Students entering grades 1-8 will be given the Brigance Diagnostic Assessment for placement.

In order for a student to be considered for STAR Student, the student must receive a score of 25 or higher on the ACT and must have a grade point average of 93 or higher. The ACT scores must also be sent to the school directly from the testing company. ACT scores that have been mailed directly to the student will not be accepted in consideration for STAR Student.

Progress Reports

Parents of all students will receive reports in the middle of each nine-weeks' grading period. Parents are required to sign the progress report and return it to the teacher, and schedule teacher conferences if needed. If the parent does not respond, the teacher or counselor will contact the parent(s).

Parents who wish to view their children's grades on line have the opportunity to sign up for an individual password per child. Once parents obtain a password, they will be able to log-on to *Active Parent* at any time and keep up with their children's grades as they are posted each week. Contact the school principal for information about how to register for access to *Active Parent*.

Homework Policy Statement

The following shall be the district's policy on homework:

1. Teachers should make assignments according to the needs and interests of students where possible.
2. Major or long-range assignments should be coordinated through the principal/assistant principal so as to avoid overloads. Additionally, daily homework assignments should be reasonable and take into account other teachers' assignments or tests so as to not overload the students.
3. Homework shall not be assigned on the nights preceding Statewide Testing dates.

Honor Rolls

Students are encouraged to do their best in their subjects. The following honors are given recognition in each grade for each nine weeks:

Superintendent's Scholar	Student must have an "A" in every subject.
Principal's Scholar	Student must have an "A" or "B" in each subject. Students cannot have a grade of "C" on the report card for the nine weeks to be eligible for Principal's Scholar.
Honor Roll	Student must have a "B" average when all subjects are averaged. A student who has one or more "C's" on his/her report card will qualify for Honor Roll if he/she has an "A" for every "C" earned during that nine weeks.

Student Intervention Process (Teacher Support Team)

Following are the guidelines for student referral to the *Teacher Support Team* in accordance to policy established by the Board of Education for the State of Mississippi.

MDE shall require an instructional model designed to meet the needs of every student. The model shall consist of three tiers of instruction. The Three-Tiered Intervention as described below is a regular education function.

Tier I: Quality classroom instruction based on MS Curriculum Frameworks
(Data documentation of interventions for a minimum of six weeks)

Tier II: Focused supplemental instruction
(Data documentation of interventions for a minimum of six weeks)

Tier III: Intensive interventions specifically designed to meet the individual needs of the student
(Six-week minimum documented interventions, not to exceed eighteen weeks maximum per subject area)

Teachers shall use progress-monitoring information to (a) determine if students are making adequate progress, (b) identify students as soon as they begin to fall behind, and (c) modify instruction early enough to ensure each and every student gains essential skills. Monitoring of student progress is an ongoing process that may be measured through informal classroom assessment, benchmark assessment instruments, and large-scale assessments.

If strategies at Tiers I & II are unsuccessful, students must be referred to the Teacher Support Team (TST). The TST is the problem-solving unit responsible for interventions developed at Tier III. Each school must have a Teacher Support Team (TST) implemented in accordance with the process developed by the Mississippi Department of Education. The chairperson of the TST shall be the school principal as the

school's instructional leader or his/her designee. The core members of the Teacher Support Team shall not be comprised of members of the school's Special Education staff. Special Education staff may serve in an advisory capacity only.

Interventions shall be:

- ✓ designed to address the deficit areas;
- ✓ research based;
- ✓ implemented as designed by the TST;
- ✓ supported by data regarding the effectiveness of interventions.

After a referral is made, the Teacher Support Team must develop and begin implementation of an intervention or interventions within two (2) weeks. No later than eight (8) weeks after implementation of the intervention(s), the TST must conduct a documented review of the intervention(s) to determine the degree of success of the intervention(s). No later than sixteen (16) weeks after implementation of the intervention(s), a second review must be conducted to determine whether the intervention(s) was (were) successful. If the intervention(s) is (are) determined to be unsuccessful, then the student will be referred to the Local Survey Committee for a comprehensive review.

In addition to failure to make adequate progress following Tiers I & II, students will be referred to the Teacher Support Team for interventions as specified in the guidelines developed by MDE if any of the following events occur.

- A. Grades 1-3: A student has failed one (1) grade;
- B. Grades 4-12: A student has failed two (2) grades;
- C. A student failed either of the preceding two grades and has been suspended or expelled for more than twenty (20) days in the current school year, OR
- D. A student scores at the Minimal level on any part of the Grade 3 or 7 Mississippi Curriculum Test (Second Edition).

Referrals to the Teacher Support Team must be made within the first twenty (20) school days of a school year if the student meets any of the criteria A-D as stated above.

Absence from School

The Amite County Board of Education classifies all absences in Grades K-12 as excused for the following reasons:

- (1) The absence results from the compulsory-school-age child's attendance at an authorized school activity with the prior approval of the superintendent of the school district or his designee. These activities may include field trips, athletic contests, student conventions, musical festivals and other similar activities.
- (2) The absence results from illness or injury which prevents the compulsory-school-age child from being physically able to attend school.
- (3) Isolation of a compulsory-age student is ordered by the county health officer, by the State Board of Health, or appropriate school official.
- (4) The absence is the result of the death or serious illness of the immediate family of the compulsory-school-age child. (Immediate family includes children, spouse, grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters, including stepbrothers and stepsisters.)
- (5) The absence results from a medical or dental appointment of the compulsory-school-age child where the approval of the superintendent of the school district or his designee has been obtained prior to the absence, except in the case of an emergency.

- (6) The absence is the result of the attendance of the compulsory-school-age child at court proceedings or an administrative tribunal if the child is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness.
- (7) The religion to which the compulsory-school-age child or the child's parents or guardians adhere, requires or suggests the observance of a religious event. The approval of the absence is within the discretion of the superintendent of the school district or his designee, but approval should be granted unless the religious observance is of such duration as to interfere with the education of the child.
- (8) The absence is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the superintendent of the school district or his designee that the purpose of the absence is to take advantage of a valid educational opportunity such as travel, including vacations or other family travel. Approval of the absence must be obtained from the superintendent of the school district, or his designee, before the absence occurs. Approval shall not be unreasonably withheld.
- (9) The absence is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the superintendent of the school district, or his designee, that conditions are sufficient to warrant the compulsory school-age child's nonattendance. However, no absences shall be excused by the superintendent or his designee when any student's suspensions or expulsions circumvent the intent and spirit of the compulsory attendance law.

Every student who is absent from school should present, upon his/her return to the school, a written excuse, signed by the parent or guardian. If a written excuse is not received within three (3) days after the student returns to school following the absence, then the absence becomes unexcused. Students will be allowed five (5) days to make up their work missed after returning to school. The teacher, with the approval of the principal, may extend the time allowed to turn in make-up work for students who are absent for an extended period (provided that the absence meets the criteria for excused absences stated above).

Only three (3) notes from parents per semester will be accepted as a written excuse for approved absences, unless prior approval for the absence has been cleared through the principal or his/her designee. (See # 1-9 under *Absence from School*). **Students who suffer from a chronic medical condition shall be exempt from this previously stated requirement provided that he/she has a statement from the student's doctor on file in the school office stating the possibility of extended absences for the student due to the medical condition.**

Each school shall designate a member of the school staff to contact parents by telephone each day if their child is absent or tardy to school. After three absences or tardies to school, the school shall send a letter to the parents stating the number of days missed.

Students who are absent due to an out-of-school suspension shall be allowed to complete his/her work at home; however, the parent(s) will be responsible for picking up assignments at school and returning the assignments each day during the suspension. If parents are unable to pick up assignments from school daily, the student will be responsible for obtaining the assignments from his/her teacher upon return to school. The length of time for completion of any missed assignments during a student suspension shall be based on the number of days missed due to the suspension and must be equal to the number of days given as acceptance of make-up assignments for any excused absences. Any tests that a student misses while serving an out-of-school suspension must be completed at school in the presence of a teacher or other school staff member. The student will be responsible for arranging with the teacher a time to complete missed tests or other make-up assignments.

If a compulsory-school-age child has not been enrolled in a school within fifteen (15) calendar days after the first day of the school year which the child is eligible to attend or if the child has accumulated five (5) unlawful absences during the school year, the student shall be reported to the Amite County Attendance Officer. This report must be completed within two (2) school days or five (5) calendar days, whichever is less. After the student has been reported to the attendance officer, the attendance officer will investigate the reason for the absence and properly contact the parents or guardian of the child to provide written notice of the requirements of the child's enrollment or attendance. (The Amite County Attendance Officer may be contacted at 601-657-8920).

Any parent or guardian of a compulsory-school-age child who refuses or willfully fails to enroll the child in school within eighteen (18) calendar days after the first day of the school year of the public school which the child is eligible to attend, or if the child has accumulated twelve (12) unlawful absences during the school year will be subject to prosecution under the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance law (37-13-91).

Attendance Criteria for Receiving Course Credit

All students attending the Amite County School District must attend a minimum of 168 days out of the total scheduled days (180) of school in order for the student to be eligible to receive academic credit for the school year. For semester courses, students must attend 84 out of the 90 days scheduled to receive class credit. All absences, other than school activities, those accompanied by a doctor's excuse or due to out of school suspension are counted in the total number of absences allowed. Absences are counted for each class period and students must not miss more than half of the class period to be counted present.

Illnesses, health reasons such as isolation, medical or dental appointments, religious events, court ordered appearances, death of family member, or travel for education opportunities must be approved by the Superintendent.

Unexcused Absences

An absence is **unexcused** when any of the criteria for excused absences are not applicable. School administrators are authorized to verify the excuses and determine that an absence is unexcused because the criteria for an excused absence is not present as described in the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law (Section 37-13-91 of the Mississippi Code of 1972).

Out-of-school suspensions are imposed by the school administration for disciplinary reasons and are considered an unexcused absence from school. For purposes of attendance, the suspension days will not be counted towards the total days allowed prior to the student losing credit for the classes under the district's attendance policy guidelines as set forth above.

For any absence, the student must provide a note on the day he/she returns to school from the parent/guardian or doctor to validate the absence. Only three (3) notes per semester from a parent/guardian will be accepted as excused. This note must state the reason for the absence, the dates missed, and must contain a signature and telephone number of the parent/guardian. All excuses must be presented within three days of the student's return to school.

Students/Parents/Legal Guardians are responsible for keeping up with student absences.

Once the student exceeds the allowable days for absences, the principal shall be responsible for timely written notification to the attendance officer, Mrs. Essie Mays, who will then notify student/parent legal guardian. Teachers and administrators shall work together to advise students and parents that their excessive absences may result in loss of academic credit. Even after such notification the student/parent/legal guardian will still be responsible for submitting the required note for any further absences incurred and such notes shall be placed on file to be considered by the District Review Committee should the student/parent/guardian seek a ruling (exception) from the committee.

At the time the principal notifies the student/parent/legal guardian that the student has excessive absences, the principal shall also provide the proper form explaining procedures for requesting review by the attendance hearing committee. **This form must be completed and returned to the principal within five (5) days.**

If the student/parent/guardian requests a review by the attendance hearing committee, the principal shall immediately forward a copy of the request and all available information, including the

principal's recommendation to the committee. The chairman will be responsible for notifying the student/parent/guardian of the time and date of the review.

Dismissal before End of School Day

Students should not be dismissed before the end of the school day except under urgent circumstances where requested by a parent or legal guardian. Dismissals may be approved only by the principal or his designee then in charge. If someone other than a parent or legal guardian requests the dismissal of a student, the principal or other authority must not act on such request unless and until:

1. A parent (in person) or other person authorized by parent to pick the child up from school (in person) has informed the school office staff that they are present to check out the student.
2. **A written request signed by a parent or legal guardian. For verification as to the authenticity of the signature on such request a signature card, signed by the parent, must be on file in the school office.**
3. Any senior who has a part-time job may be dismissed for the second half of the school day provided that he/she has a permission slip (signed by his/her parent) on file in the office. In addition, the student must provide the school each month with proof of employment. The school has the authority to check with the employer periodically to verify that the student is still employed. **Seniors who have not passed all areas of the SATP or are in danger of failing courses required for graduation shall not be allowed to be dismissed early for employment.**
4. Seniors or juniors who qualify to take a dual enrollment course are eligible to be dismissed the second half of the day to attend their dual enrollment classes if the classes are being held in the afternoon. The student must present proof of registration in the dual enrollment class to the principal before permission will be granted for half-day attendance.
5. Students will not be allowed to check out on his/her own.
6. Once a student has checked out, he/she must leave campus or face disciplinary actions.

Students will not be allowed to leave campus or be absent from an assigned class without permission from the principal. Teachers are not authorized to dismiss students from class or from the campus without clearance from an administrator. Dismissal requests from parents/guardians should be presented to the appropriate school office by 8:00a.m. on the day of the intended early dismissal. The decision as to whether the dismissal from classes is excused or unexcused shall rest with the administrator issuing approval for the dismissal.

In order to avoid interruption of class activities (except in emergency situations), parents/guardians should not request dismissal prior to the end of the class period. Special situation or emergencies should be handled through the appropriate administrator's office.

Student Check-out Procedures

- A parent/guardian or designee who is listed on the student emergency card must physically come and pick up the student. No phone calls will be accepted.
- Photo identification may be required to check out a student.
- No lunch check-outs will be allowed unless a doctor's note is presented upon return.

Student Tardiness

In order to promote the concepts of timeliness and responsibility in students, the following policy shall be followed in regards to tardiness:

- Students are expected to be in classes promptly. Students are not allowed to be out of class without the permission of the principal, assistant principal, or teacher. If the teacher is sending the student out of class, the student must be in the possession of a hall pass.

- Students are allowed sufficient time to pass from one class to the next and should not be tardy except in cases of emergency. If an emergency should arise, the student must get an admittance slip from authorized office personnel. In the event the student needs more than the specified time, the student should report to his/her class first and obtain the permission of the teacher.
- An unexcused tardy to school or class will result in a disciplinary action.
- Students will not be allowed to make up work missed due to an unexcused tardy.
- A student is considered tardy if he/she arrives at school or class after the tardy bell rings. **No student shall be allowed to enter class after the tardy bell rings without an appropriate admittance slip issued through the school office.**
- Tardiness due to personal illness, illness in the family, death in the family, or other emergencies may be approved provided a written note is received from the student's parent or guardian. **Oversleeping, clock failure, missed rides, etc. will not be considered excused tardies.**
- Students in attendance for less than on-half of the class period/day will be counted as absent for that period/day.
- **School principals are authorized to determine appropriate management and disciplinary techniques to be used when students are tardy to school or class.**

Emergency Drills

All students are required to participate in various emergency drills. Specific instructions shall be given by the principal and teacher in accordance with the school's crisis management plan..

Displaying U.S. Flag/ Pledge of Allegiance

Senate Bill 2321

Legislative action requires all public school systems to follow these guidelines for displaying the U.S. flag and pledging allegiance to the flag:

1. The U.S. flag shall be displayed in each classroom and in each principle room of the school building at all times while school is in session. It shall be the duty of the school board of each district to provide student instruction in the proper etiquette toward correct display of the flag, respect for the flag, and in participation in patriotic exercises. The instruction shall be a part of each district's fifth-grade social studies curriculum or history curriculum, with the assistance of the State Department of Education.
2. From and after July 1, 2002, the school boards of all public schools of this state shall require teachers to have all pupils repeat the oath of allegiance to the U.S. flag at the beginning of the first hour of class each day school is in session. Any student or teacher who objects to reciting the oath of allegiance shall be excused from participating without penalty.
3. Additionally, whenever the flag of the United States is to be flown at half-staff by order of instructions of the President or pursuant to federal law, all public schools shall lower the United States flag in accordance with the executive order or instructions or pursuant to federal law. The school shall announce the reason that the flag is being flown at half-staff to all students in assembly, by teachers in various classrooms, or by prominently displaying written notice throughout the school stating the reason that the flag has been lowered.

Cafeteria Conduct

Students should observe the following rules and regulations while using the cafeteria:

1. No excessively loud talking or laughing is permitted in the cafeteria.
2. Books, purses, etc., must not be placed on cafeteria tables.
3. Students are not to sit on the tables at any time.
4. Students shall remove trays and empty cartons from the tables.
5. Students shall not throw food.

7. Cutting in serving lines is not allowed.
8. No soft drinks are allowed in the cafeteria.
9. No food is to be taken out of the cafeteria.
10. Lunches may not be delivered during the students' lunch period.

Access to School Computers and the Internet

In compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and other applicable State and Federal laws, the Amite County School District maintains an Appropriate Use Policy covering all rules and regulations for use of school computers and access to the school network and the Internet. Anyone using a computer in the school district must read, agree to and sign the AUP each school year. Copies may be obtained from the School District Website – www.amite.ms – or the School Office.

Parental Permission to Post Student Pictures on School Website or in Local Media

Parents must sign a media permission form if they want their children to be able to receive recognition in local newspapers or on the school website.

Instructional Materials

Students must be responsible for bringing adequate materials to class. Materials such as textbooks, notebooks, pencils, pens, etc. should be brought to class each day unless instructed otherwise. (For information about the consequences for not bringing materials to class, refer to page 63.)

Counseling Services

Counseling is the core of the guidance program. It is a process, which takes place between individuals in both person-to-person, and in group relationships intended to result in increased insight, self-understanding, and behavior change. Its aim is to help each student grow and develop educationally through his/her school experiences.

How Counselors Help Students:

1. Confer with students both individually and in groups regarding progress and problems.
2. Administer prescribed tests.
3. Confer with students, parents and teachers regarding the students' progress, needs and problems.
4. Make referral to other agencies when the problem goes beyond that of counseling.
5. Help students select a program of study.
6. Help improve social and academic adjustments of students.
7. Show students the need for good attendance.
8. Obtain information on college entrance requirements, scholarship awards, grants, etc., and pass information on to students.
9. Register and schedule all students.
10. Check student records and requirements.
11. Place students in the right classes.
12. Balance teacher class loads.
13. Supervise proper upkeep of records.

Withdrawal from School

Students must check with the guidance counselor and fill out a withdrawal form before withdrawing from school. This form must be signed by the student's parent/guardian, teachers, the librarian and the principal before he/she can officially withdraw.

Schedule Changes (Including Class Withdrawals)

No students will be permitted to change his/her schedule without permission from the principal, counselor and parent(s). Before any teacher can drop or add a student in any class, the teacher must have a schedule change signed by the principal, counselor, and a parent or guardian. **No schedule changes will be allowed for full-year courses after the first two weeks of the school year.** Transfer students enrolling in school after the opening date will not be allowed to change schedules unless, upon receipt of their records from the previous school, a change is needed. **Only the principal shall have the authority to make schedule changes for special circumstances after the deadline has passed for schedule changes.**

Care of School Property

The condition of the walls of the building, the furniture in the classrooms, auditorium, library, gym and cafeteria should be a source of personal pride to each student. Students are expected to make every effort to keep the school grounds neat and clean by disposing of all trash in the containers provided for this purpose. Every student should not only refrain from defacing or destroying school property but should make every possible effort to induce his/her fellow students to do likewise. Students responsible for defacing or damaging property will be responsible for cleaning any removable damages for which they are responsible. **Section 37-11-9 of the Mississippi School Law Bulletin says, "If any pupil shall destroy, cut, deface, damage, or injure any building, equipment or other school property he/she shall be liable to suspension or expulsion and his/her parents or persons in Loco Parentis shall be liable for damages."**

School Assemblies

Assembly programs are presented on designated days. Some objectives of the assembly programs are to:

1. Provide opportunity for students to share mutual experiences.
2. Develop group consciousness, group morale, and a feeling of belonging.
3. Develop intelligent and courteous audience habits and attitudes.
4. Provide an opportunity for students to cooperate with others in creating, directing, and participating.

Textbooks

Districts-owned textbooks are furnished to each student. Workbooks and other instructional supplies are purchased by each student. Parent signatures must be obtained on the student's bookcard before any textbooks can be issued to the student. The parental signature indicates that the parents will assume responsibility for all book fines if a book is lost or damaged. The student's name shall be recorded in the textbook and the textbook number recorded on the student's bookcard. Each student is responsible for any damage to his/her books and will be fined at the end of the year for those damages. **The Mississippi State Law requires that teachers collect fines for damages to a book and for the loss of books. No student will receive textbooks if he/she has an outstanding textbook fine. Report cards and diplomas shall also be held until all outstanding textbook fines are paid.**

No transcript or academic information shall be released to any college or other educational institute for a graduating senior until the student has paid all outstanding fines for lost or damaged textbooks, provided that the student has been given timely notice and an opportunity for a hearing.

Textbook fines for lost or damaged books are as follows:

<u>Damage</u>	<u>Fine</u>
Writing/drawing/scribbling in book	\$1.00 per page
Excess wear/damage but still usable	10% of cost of book
Cover of book damaged	25% of cost of book
Spine damaged	25% of cost of book
Water damaged but still usable	25% of cost of book
Water damaged, not usable	Cost of book
Pages missing, not usable	Cost of book
Obscene writing or drawing on or in book	Cost of book
Book lost or not returned	Cost of book

Corridors

In the corridors the student shall:

1. Make a habit of walking on the right side.
2. Go directly to next class.
3. If a teacher or visitor comes through the corridor when it is crowded, courteously move to one side.
4. Proper respect for elders is expected at all times.
5. Be considerate of classes that are being conducted.
6. Do not run in the halls.
7. Friendliness should be exerted at all times to anyone on your campus.
8. Always report to designated areas upon arrival at school.
9. When in the hall during class time, students must have a pass.

Lost and Found Articles

All articles and textbooks found about the building and on the school grounds should be turned in to the office.

Student Medication at School

Note: As used in the handbook the term medication shall mean both prescription drugs and “over-the-counter” drugs not requiring a doctor’s prescription.

This policy is designed to safely administer medications to our students in the school setting. Components of the policy are as follows:

- All medications, administered in the school setting must be ordered by a practicing licensed physician, dentist or nurse practitioner.
- A written, dated authorization to the school from the parent/guardian is required for each medication to be administered.
- Medications must be provided to the school in a container acceptable by pharmacy standards. ALL MEDICATIONS MUST BE BROUGHT TO THE SCHOOL BY THE PARENT/GUARDIAN.
- Clear instruction for the administration of medication must be provided.
- At least two unlicensed employees (designated by the principal) at each school are trained to administer medications.
- Both general training and child specific training provided by the school nurse are required.
- A school employed RN must assess the health status of the student in the educational setting and review the orders and authorization to determine that according to the respective standards of care,

the administration of the medication can be safely performed by the delegated licensed and/or unlicensed, trained personnel.

- All medication shall be locked up with the exception of refrigerated medications that will be placed in the school nurse's refrigerator.
- Any student diagnosed as asthmatic and requiring the use of an asthma inhaler or diagnosed with diabetes and requires insulin at school will be allowed to do so with a physician's order and parental consent. The school nurse will assess the student's ability to use the inhaler or insulin injections and determine if he/she needs assistance with the prescribed inhaler. This demonstration shall be documented.

Self Administration of Medications

1. According to the MS Code, the Amite County School District shall permit the self-administration of medication by a student if the student's parent or guardian:
 - Provide written authorization for self-administration to the school; and
 - Provide a written statement from the student's health care practitioner that the student has asthma and has been instructed in self-administration of asthma medications. The statement shall also contain the following information;
 - a. The name and purpose of the medications;
 - b. The prescribed dosage;
 - c. The time or times the medications are to be regularly administered and under what additional special circumstances the medications are to be administered; and
 - d. The length of time for which the medications are prescribed.
2. The statements required in subsection (1) of this section shall be kept on file in the office of the school nurse.
3. The parent or guardian of the student shall sign a statement acknowledging that the school shall incur no liability and the parent or guardian shall indemnify and hold harmless the school and its employees against any claims relating to the self-administration of asthma and diabetes medications.
4. The permission for self-administration of medication shall be effective for the school year in which it is granted and shall be renewed each following year upon fulfilling the requirements of subsections (1) through (3) of this section.
5. Upon fulfilling the requirements of this section, a student with asthma may possess and use asthma medications when at school, at a school-sponsored activity, under the supervision of school personnel or before and after normal school activities while on school properties including school-sponsored after-school or extended year programs.

Bulletin Boards

Students must get office approval before posting any sign or poster on campus. Materials will be posted from time to time by the office for your information at places designated as the bulletin board area.

Student Clubs and Organizations

Student clubs and organizations are encouraged; however, such clubs and organizations shall only be organized and operative after the School Board has granted approval. No club or organization shall be formed without a proper sponsor, who shall be a certified staff member of the district. Secret clubs and organizations are not permitted in the schools of the district. Student who form, become members of, or participate in activities involving a non-approved club or organization shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Fundraising Activities

Clubs, organizations, and other school programs often wish to conduct fundraising activities to raise funds for projects, trips, convention attendance, and other operations of the group. However, such activities

should be as limited as possible. Sponsors wishing to conduct such activities shall follow the procedures for making fundraising requests:

1. The sponsor is to neatly complete request forms as provided by the school district.
2. The forms are to be submitted to the appropriate principal for approval or denial.
3. If approved, the request form will be presented to the Superintendent, who will have the final authority to either approve or deny the request.

Student Publications

Student publications are part of the total school program. Any publication must be appropriate as to grade level and content. All publications are self-supporting and shall be sponsored by a faculty advisor. Any articles, pictures, slogans, or other written/visual material to be used in an approved publication must be cleared through the principal of the school before the publication is printed and distributed. This policy includes school newspapers/newsletters, pamphlets, brochures, or any other publications associated with the school.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/teacher conferences are an integral part of reporting student progress. Therefore, time will be scheduled into the district's calendar for this purpose. The school will advertise scheduled conferences, such as open houses in the local newspaper and through newsletters in an effort to inform parents and encourage the cooperation of local businesses to allow release time from work so that parents may attend these conferences.

Students and parents should contact the school office to arrange teacher conferences to avoid class interruptions. These conferences will be scheduled during the teacher's planning period.

Test Papers

Nine-week test papers will be returned to the students for review of errors and then filed by the teacher in the student's folder. Parents may review these papers during scheduled conferences. These papers will be destroyed at the beginning of the following school year.

Change of Address

If at any time during the year a change of address or telephone number is made, the student should immediately report such change to the homeroom teacher so that the proper changes may be made to the student's records and emergency card.

Telephones (School Phones and Student Cell Phones/Other Electronic Devices)

The office phones are not a public facility but rather for business use only. However, in case of an emergency, students will be allowed to use the telephone after getting permission from the office. Students should not expect to use the telephone to call friends, to ask parents to bring homework or materials left at home, etc. Student may receive telephone calls for emergencies only.

Students will not be allowed to have cell phones or other electronic devices in their possession in the school buildings. Exceptions for "other electronic devices" shall be approved if they are the property of the Amite County School District and being assigned by the teacher to students to use for instructional purposes in the classroom only. For the first cell phone/other electronic device violation, the student's cell phone or other electronic device shall be confiscated and his/her parents called for a conference with the principal. The cell phone or electronic device will be returned at the end of the conference to the student's parents. The second offense shall result in the cell phone or electronic device being confiscated for thirty (30) days. At the end of the thirty (30) days, the parent or guardian may retrieve the item from the school. Any further violations concerning cell phones or other electronic devices at school shall result in

confiscation of the cell phone. Confiscated items will be locked up in the school office for the remainder of the school year. At the end of the school year, parents may pick the cell phone or other electronic device up from the school office. Six weeks after the end of the school year, any unclaimed electronic items shall be deemed abandoned and the district shall have the authority to dispose of the items.

The district shall not guarantee the safekeeping or segregation of confiscated items and shall bear no responsibility for the damage or destruction of confiscated items, including those items that have been stolen or misplaced.

Study Habits

To have a happy and successful school life, each student must develop proper study habits. He will be taught the fundamentals of study as they apply to each particular subject. The following are some general suggestions for improving study habits:

1. Write down homework assignments each day.
2. Set a regular time and place to study.
3. Concentrate on the assigned work.
4. Keep sufficient materials at your place to avoid unnecessary interruptions.
5. Use will power to complete each assignment.
6. Keep up with daily assignments.
7. Maintain good health.
8. Eat proper foods.
9. Have vision and hearing tested if necessary.
10. Realize that learning pays.
11. Take pride in being a good student.

Awards

Many awards are presented each year as a means of encouraging perfect attendance, high scholarship in academic subjects and to recognize student achievement in various school activities. Local citizens, organizations and the school make these awards possible. Each school in the district presents an annual awards day program for students who have exhibited scholarship in their work.

Student Activities

Accreditation standards require (1) that the school district does not participate in activities that require any student to miss more than 20 class periods in courses for which grades and /or units of credit are issued during the school year; and (2) that the school district does not participate in activities that require a student to have more than five planned absences in the same class period in courses for which grades and /or units of credit are issued.

Unauthorized Selling

There shall be no unauthorized selling of any type of merchandise. The administration will announce to the entire school when items are to be sold.

Insurance

Each student will be given the opportunity to take out school accident insurance soon after school begins. Parents are encouraged to participate in the insurance program.

If a child participates in any extra-curricular activity, they must have proof of the purchase of this insurance and/or any other insurance on file at the school. Parents must sign a permission form for a student to participate in an extra-curricular activity.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

Students have a right to a public education, but with this right comes a personal responsibility. Education is a process that requires a safe and orderly environment. Students have a responsibility to know and to respect the rules and regulations of the school. Conduct is the manner in which students are expected to act so that the required order and ambiance for learning can be achieved and maintained. Students are responsible for conducting themselves in an appropriate manner at all times. Students who obstruct any teaching, administrative, or extra-curricular activity shall be subject to such disciplinary procedures as set forth in this document.

Every teacher is authorized to hold every student to a strict accountability for an orderly learning environment. Every student is strictly accountable for any disorderly conduct whether in school, on the playground or grounds outside the school buildings, at a school-related event or activity, or in route to or from school.

For the proper learning environment to be maintained, it is imperative that each school makes certain that students understand the conduct that is appropriate. To assist students, parents, and staff in maintaining such an environment a *Student Code of Conduct* has been developed and approved by the Amite County Board of Education.

This book includes an authorized plan for disciplinary action. While it covers most offenses, it is recognized that the plan is not all-inclusive. After careful review of the facts and other pertinent information in each case, the principal will take appropriate action.

A student handbook serves as an information guide and is provided to every student/parent or legal guardian of students enrolled in the Amite County School District.

Students and parents must sign a form acknowledging that they received the Amite County School District's *Student Code of Conduct* and are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

I. Discipline Overview

According to state law, a parent, legal guardian or custodian of a compulsory school-age child enrolled in a public school district shall be responsible financially for his or her minor child's destructive acts against school property or persons. Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-19.

A parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory school-age child enrolled in a public school district may be requested to appear at school by an appropriate school official for a conference regarding acts of the child.

II. Code of Conduct Purpose

Students have the right to a public education, but they are responsible for complying with rules and regulation of the Amite County School District and the reasonable instructions of all school personnel.

In addition to these rules, each local school or building principal may develop additional rules and regulations that govern student behavior and discipline at the school site. However, these campus rules and procedures must be consistent with policies and procedures established by the Amite County Board of Education and the Superintendent of Education.

III. Students Rights and Responsibilities

All students in the Amite County School District have certain basic rights and responsibilities as outlined by the Amite County School District policies in compliance with the U.S. Constitution, Constitution of the State of Mississippi, and Mississippi state law.

1. *Rights to a Public Education*
Each student has a right to a public education and the equal opportunities associated with this right, which includes school programs and activities.
2. *Right to Freedom of Expression*
Students have the right to express their own opinions verbally or in writing as long as their opinions do not disrupt the learning process or threaten harm to another person.
3. *Right to Privacy*
Each student has the right to expect that academic records are confidential and can only be inspected by eligible students, parents/guardians, school officials, and other persons or organizations as permitted under law.
4. *Right to Due Process*
Each student has a right to due process and to disciplinary hearings as outlined by district policy.

Student Responsibilities-appropriate Social and Academic Behavior

Each student in the Amite County School District is expected to:

1. Attend all classes daily, and be punctual in attendance.
2. Come to class prepared and have appropriate working materials.
3. Be respectful of all individuals and property.
4. Conduct himself/herself in a safe and responsible manner.
5. Be responsible for his or her work and behavior.
6. Abide by the rules and regulation of the school and each classroom teacher.
7. Students are expected to choose appropriate dress and be neatly groomed and to abide by school policies and regulations.
8. If a student has a serious problem, he/she is to report it promptly to his teacher, any other supervising adult and his parent(s). If reported to his/her parent(s) the parent(s) will contact the principal immediately.

IV. Student Dress Code

The purpose of the dress and grooming code is to clearly define the expectations of each student and to establish a balance between contemporary standards and standards of decency. It is not the intention of the School Board to overly restrict the student's freedom, but rather to create an educational environment free of distraction so each student will have the opportunity to concentrate on making the pursuit of knowledge his/her number one priority. The policy of the School Board shall be that no mode of attire will be considered proper for school wear that disrupts the classroom and/or the school's positive learning

environment. The principal or his/her designee of each school shall make the final decision as to what is considered proper or improper dress according to the guidelines provided.

The Board's position is that it wants to teach each student to use good judgment in his/her total appearance so that the attention of others is not distracted from the purpose of the school. Cleanliness and the values of the community shall be a basic consideration.

Dress and Grooming Guidelines

The dress and grooming of the students shall be that which, in the opinion of the ordinary reasonable person, contribute to the health and safety of the individual and which is non-disruptive to the educational activities and processes of a school.

Dress Code Regulations

To assure that students observe basic rules of personal hygiene and dress in a manner that would not disrupt the educational process, the following dress code regulations shall apply:

1. Beards and mustaches must be neatly trimmed. Moderate hairstyles are permitted. Students are prohibited from wearing hair curlers or other hair grooming aids or implements.
2. Caps, *hoods*, and hats are not to be worn in the school buildings. Caps and hats shall remain in the lockers or bookbags during school hours.
3. Appropriate footwear shall be worn. (No shower shoes, slippers, or *thong sandals*). ***In the shop areas, full shoes must be worn for safety purposes.***
4. Students are not to wear sunglasses in the school building unless a doctor's written permit to this effect is on file at the school.
5. Clothing, jewelry, buttons, patches, or any other items with words, phrases, symbols, pictures, or signs which fit the following criteria shall not be worn:
 - (a) use indecent, profane, suggestive, inflammatory, or discriminatory messages, or,
 - (b) promote drugs, alcohol, or tobacco, or,
 - (c) are symbolic of gangs, cults, or group identifications.
6. **Shirts must be tucked into pants, shirts, shorts, etc. Female students are not allowed to wear shirts or blouses with low plunging necklines. Additionally, shirts that expose the midriff shall not be worn.**
7. ***Black or brown*** belts must be worn with clothing that has belt loops. ***No decorative belts may be worn.***
8. Students may wear knee-length shorts. Gym shorts are appropriate only for physical education classes or programs and are not to be worn to attend other classes.
9. Excessively short dresses or skirts (including high-cut slits) shall not be allowed.
10. No items may be worn that may be used as a weapon (belt chains, locks, dog chains, choke chains, ***large belt buckles***, etc).
11. **Modifications to the dress code may be made only with the approval of the Superintendent.**

Uniform Regulations

Pants

All students' (boys and girls) pants shall be as follows:

Khaki color slacks with or without pleats, with or without pockets, and with or without belt loops (if belt loops, students must wear a ***brown or black*** belt).

Khaki color jeans shall be allowed.

Pants must be worn around the waist.

Pants must be worn in the child's appropriate size. No "sagging", no over-sized pants, no wide-legged, no bell bottoms, no cargo, no safari, or carpenter pants shall be allowed. ***Long pants cannot be rolled at the leg.***

Shirts

All students (K-12) shall have a choice of long or short sleeve, polo style (pull over) or oxford style (button up) shirt. Shirts with a zipper are not acceptable. The color of shirts shall be black, gold or white. ***The school emblem is optional; however, if the emblem is printed on the shirt, it must be the Board approved emble.***

Under Garments

All under garments (t-shirts, sweat shirts, turtlenecks, etc.) must be black, gold, or white.

Outer Garments

Campus and/or classroom wear shall consist of gold, white, or black sweater (pull over, vest, button up, zipper, or snap), sweatshirt, or windbreaker. Outer garments with excessive writing are unacceptable. ***No other shirt can be worn as an outer garment. Heavy coats/jackets are not subject to color regulations.***

Jumpers

Girls (grades K-12) have the option to wear basic A-line or bib jumpers in khaki color.

Skirts

Skirts are acceptable for girls in grades K-12. Skirts must be khaki in color.

Shorts/Skortts

Students may wear knee-length shorts or skortts. Shorts and shorts must be khaki in color.

VIOLATIONS

Violations of the Dress Code shall be addressed as follows:

1. The student shall be sent to the office. If the determination is made that the Student is in violation of the Dress Code, the following steps will be taken:
 - a. The parents shall be notified of the violation; and
 - b. Requested to bring proper clothing to the school.

2. If the parents cannot be contacted by phone, or if clothing is not brought to the school, the student will be sent to a designated area in the school determined by the principal or designee. Also, a letter shall be sent home to the parents stating the violation and reminding them that the suspension will result in future offenses.
3. Whenever a student has violated the Dress Code a second time, the student may be suspended for one (1) day due to disrespect of authority.

V. Items not Allowed at School

Each student in the Amite County School District is expected to conduct himself/herself in an appropriate manner and not bring:

1. Electronic Devices included but not limited to radios, TV's, tape players/recorders, cellular phones, compact disc players, video games, pagers, tapes, laser pointers, etc.
2. Candy and other food items to sell or exchange without the principal's approval.
3. Weapons (real or toys), Mace, pepper spray, brass knuckles and any other item considered to be a weapon are not allowed on any school property of the Amite County School District. This includes buses, buildings, school grounds, including gyms and athletic fields.
4. Laser lights. Students who bring these lights and are instrumental in causing injury to others will be subject to disciplinary action, including expulsion.
5. Any other items that will be disruptive to the learning process. These items include YO-YO's trading and playing cards, dice and other gambling paraphernalia, cigarettes, matches, lighters, large sums of money not designated for school activities, and any illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia.

Students are allowed to bring to school only school supplies. The teacher or principal will contact parents if students are to bring other items.

HANDLING OF ABANDONED OR SEIZED PROPERTY THAT HAS BEEN CONFISCATED FROM STUDENTS

The Student/Parent Handbook lists those items students may not bring to school. Upon discovery of any such item in a student's possession, a teacher, principal, or other district employee charged with enforcing district policies may confiscate such item(s). Such items will be transferred to the principal's office in accordance with procedures developed by the district. The parent or legal guardian of the student may retrieve the confiscated item(s) according to the following guidelines:

- (First offense) Parent must come to school to retrieve the item.
- (Second offense) The item(s) will remain in the custody of the school for thirty (30) days. At the end of the thirty days, the parent or guardian may retrieve the item from the school.
- (Third and consecutive offences) Confiscated items shall be held in school possession for the remainder of the school year. Parents will be responsible for the retrieval of the item(s).

Six weeks after the end of the school year, all unclaimed items shall be deemed abandoned. The district will then determine the appropriate disposition on any abandoned items.

The district shall not guarantee the safekeeping or segregation of any confiscated items and shall bear no responsibility for the damage or destruction of confiscated items including those items that have been stolen or misplaced.

DISCIPLINE: STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Removals

In-School Suspension (ISS)

1. A student with disabilities should not be assigned to ISS for more than three (3) consecutive days. School administrators must ensure Exceptional Education Services are provided daily to all students with disabilities assigned to ISS.
2. Following three (3) incidents of behavior(s) that result in assignment to ISS, the IEP Committee must review the IEP and develop a behavior plan to address the student's behavior subject to the disciplinary action or if a behavior plan is in place, the behavior plan must be reviewed/revise to address the specific behavior.

Removal of Ten (10) Days or Less Per Incident

School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when deciding to order a change in placement for a child with a disability who violates the student code of conduct.

School personnel may order the removal of a child for not more than ten (10) consecutive school days *to the extent that such removals would be applied to children without a disability for the same offense or when the child's behavior is deemed to be dangerous behavior**. Additional removals of not more than ten (10) consecutive school days in the same school year for separate incidents of misconduct may be ordered, as long as those removals do not constitute a change in placement. A change of placement occurs when a series of removals are made that constitute a pattern due to the child being removed for more than ten (10) school days in a school year, and because of factors such as length of each removal, the total amount of time the child is removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another.

Services

Services must be provided during such removals as follows:

- A. If a child is removed for more than ten (10) consecutive school days for a violation of school rules, services must be provided following day ten (10) of the removal. Services are not required for removals of less than ten (10) cumulative days.
- B. After a child has been removed from his or her current placement for more than ten (10) cumulative school days in the same school year, during any subsequent days of removal, the local school district must provide services.
- C. In the case where a child is removed for a violation of school rules for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or has been removed for more than ten (10) cumulative school days, and such removal constitutes a change in placement, services must be provided. After the child has been suspended for a total of twenty (20) days for school rule violations, the school will provide services within the school district, unless the child represents a danger to himself or others; and
- D. Services will be provided to the extent necessary to enable the child to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and appropriately advance toward achieving the goals set out in the child's IEP. School personnel, in consultation with the child's special education teacher, will determine the extent of services necessary to enable the child to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and appropriately advance toward achieving the goals set in the child's IEP. Schools must provide all services that can be reasonably provided outside the school setting.

* School day is defined as any day, including a partial day that children are in attendance at school for instructional purposes. This term has the same meaning for all children in school, including students with and without disabilities.

** Dangerous behavior is defined as behavior of a student that poses a threat of imminent, serious physical injury to the students or others, or behavior that results in serious physical injury to the student or others.

AMITE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT DISCIPLINARY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Discipline Policy

It is the goal of the Amite County School District to maintain a safe and orderly climate where all students feel secure in a positive learning environment. Every effort is made to develop and maintain harmonious relationships between students and school staff based upon mutual respect and understanding. The basic objectives of the Amite County School District's discipline policy are:

- (1) To establish conditions under which no student will be permitted to prevent any teacher from teaching or any student from learning
- (2) To establish and maintain study conditions that are conducive to learning
- (3) To develop, on the part of each student, the habits and skills that make him/her self-directive and to help him/her realize that he/she is responsible for his/her own behavior
- (4) To guide students in learning how to make better behavioral choices based on decision-making skills that enable them to become self-disciplined

As required by Mississippi law, any parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory-school-age child enrolled in a school district who refuses or willfully fails to attend a discipline conference specified in the discipline section may be summoned by proper notification by the superintendent or the school attendance officer and be required to attend such discipline conference.

Any parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory-school-age child who (a) fails to attend a discipline or academic conference to which such parent, guardian or custodian has been summoned under the provisions of the discipline section, or (b) refuses or willfully fails to perform any other duties imposed upon him or her under the provisions of the discipline sections, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be fined not to exceed \$250.00

Disciplinary measures/punishment may follow student failure to conform to accepted standards of behavior in the school.

Significant interruptions of the educational process resulting from overt disrespect shown by students to faculty members, unruly student behavior, and vulgar or otherwise discourteous actions will not be permitted.

Disciplinary actions as outlined in the *Student Discipline Plan* will be taken as a result of the following student misbehavior: (1) refusal to follow instructions from faculty members; (2) profane language; (3) failing to identify oneself when asked to do so by a member of the faculty; (4) insolent, contemptuous, or belligerent behavior or remarks; (5) a violation of other disciplinary rules or regulations or other good cause. (6) The Board has special concerns about harassment of students or teachers by other students and considers this an offense which may result in serious disciplinary action.

Suspension Procedures

When a principal/assistant principal or other certified administrator determines that a suspension should be invoked against a student due to the student's misconduct, as authorized under Section 37-9-71 Mississippi Code of 1972, the following procedures/guidelines will be applicable. These guidelines are applicable to out-of-school suspension or suspension of bus riding privileges that remove the student from the school setting, deny such student from attending school or school activities during the normal school day, or deny the student to ride a school bus to and from school:

1. A principal/assistant principal may suspend a student for a period not to exceed ten (10) school days.

2. A student may be suspended for more than ten (10) school days if approved by the principal and the Superintendent.
3. If the student is to be suspended immediately during normal school hours, the parent/guardian will be contacted to pick their child up immediately.
4. For any suspension, the principal or assistant principal shall require a re-admission conference with the parent/guardian prior to the student being re-admitted to school or school activities.
5. At the time the administrator invokes a suspension against a student, a written notice will be provided to the student's/parent/guardian. A copy of the district's suspension form shall be mailed to the parent/guardian within 24 hours of the suspension action. The form will state the reason for the suspension, the duration/dates of the suspension, the student's action to deny or admit the infraction noted.
6. The days missed during an out-of-school suspension period will be counted as unexcused absences. Students are responsible for any schoolwork missed while under suspension.
7. Suspended students are not permitted to enter upon school ground or to attend any school activity during the time of the suspension.

Student Suspension from School

Section 37-9-71, Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated as amended, recites as follows:

The superintendent of schools and the principal of a school shall have the power to suspend a pupil for good cause, including misconduct in the school or on school property, as defined in Section 37-11-29, on the road to and from school, or at any school-related activity or event, or for conduct occurring on property other than school property or other than at a school-related activity or event when such conduct by a pupil, in the determination of the superintendent or principal, renders that pupil's presence in the classroom a disruption to the educational environment of the school or a detriment to the best interest and welfare of the pupils and teacher of such class as a whole, or for any reason for which such pupil might be suspended, dismissed or expelled by the school board under state or federal law or any rule, regulation or policy of the local school district. However, such action of the superintendent or principal shall be subject to review by and approval or disapproval of the school board. If the parent, guardian, or other person having custody of any child shall feel aggrieved by the suspension or dismissal of that child, then such parent, guardian, or other person shall have the right to a due process hearing. The appropriate superintendent or principal shall advise the parent or guardian of the child of this right to a hearing and the proper form shall be provided for requesting such a hearing.

Suspension and Students with Disabilities

In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA, 2004 amendment)

1. Students with disabilities must not receive serial (back-to-back) suspensions.
2. Suspensions totaling over 10 days per school year are considered a change in placement, and parents must be notified and a functional behavior plan must be completed.
3. Suspensions involving drugs or weapons or serious bodily harm/threat require the IEP committee to conduct a manifestation determination review to decide if the behavior was a manifestation of the child's disability.
4. In incidences involving student drug or weapon possession or serious bodily harm/threat, a student may be expelled from school or receive educational services through an Interim Alternative Placement for 45 school days.
5. Students suspended for more than 10 total school days are entitled to continued special educational services, regardless of his/her recommended placement.

Due Process: Appeals of Disciplinary Actions

In order to preserve a student's rights and the protection of due process of law, any student shall be given the opportunity for a hearing before appropriate school district officials should he/she or his parent/guardian desire to have a hearing. (Differences, disputes, and conflicts between students and staff are usually civil matters and not criminal ones.) There is a defined method and protocol to the appeals

procedure. The following is the step-by-step procedure to be used for appealing decisions/actions of school district personnel:

1. If the appeal concerns an action by a teacher, the appeal is to first be made to the teacher's supervising principal.
2. If the appeal concerns an action by a principal, then the initial appeal should be made to that administrator.
3. If, after Step 2 no consensus is reached, the appeal may be made to the District Committee. The District Discipline Committee will render its decision in the matter and submit the same to the Superintendent. The Superintendent is authorized to accept, reject, and/or modify the decision of the Committee.
4. If, after Step 3 no consensus is reached, the student or his/her parent/guardian may make written request for appeal to the Board of Education. This request must be made through the use of the proper request form, which is available in the Office of the Superintendent. The Board, in its sole and absolute discretion, will determine whether or not the appeal has merit to be heard by the Board. If so, it will be heard in the form of a written transcript of the Discipline Hearing. If the Board determines that the Superintendent's decision and/or the decision of the Disciplinary Committee is final, then such appeal request will be denied and the student and/or his/her parent/guardian shall be notified in writing by the District Office.

Appeal of Suspension Decision/Due Process

If a student/parent/guardian is aggrieved by the suspension decision of the administrator, the student/parent/guardian may appeal the decision in accordance with the following guidelines approved by the Board of Education:

1. For appeal of suspensions lasting from 1-5 school days as invoked by principals/assistant principals, the student/parent/guardian may appeal to the principal. The decision of the principal shall be final.
2. For appeal of suspensions lasting from 6-10 days as invoked by a principal/assistant principal, approved by the principal and authorized by the District Office, the appeal may be made to the District Discipline Committee. The decision of the District Discipline Committee and the superintendent will be final.
3. For appeal of suspensions lasting more than 10 days, appeal may be made to the Board of Education.
4. All requests must be made in writing.
5. Failure to appear at the scheduled time without prior notification to the superintendent will represent a forfeiture of the review.
6. A student may be put in in-school suspension or returned to the classroom until the issue is resolved.
7. If the decision of the committee is to uphold the principal's decision, then the student will be required to fulfill said disciplinary action.

District Discipline Committee

The District Discipline Committee is directed by the Superintendent, who shall organize, chair, and direct the procedural matters connected with the operation of the committee. This committee will be composed of individuals appointed by the Superintendent. The committee will meet in the District Office on a regular basis to hear student matters as necessary under the guidelines of the district's discipline plan and appeals procedures.

Searches by School Officials

Use of Drug Dogs in the Schools by Law Enforcement

The threat of or the use, possession, and sale of illegal drugs must be prohibited at the schools of the district. The Board recognizes that law enforcement officials make use of specially trained canines to detect the presence of illegal drugs. This practice has its benefits when used in harmony with safe handling of the canines and within the scope of proper use.

1. No drug dogs will be used in the schools of the district without the specific approval of the Superintendent. All arrangements for the use of drug dogs will be coordinated through the Office of the Superintendent.
2. Contact for the coordination of using canines in the schools for drug searches will be made through the Office of the Superintendent. Contact with school principals/assistant principals will be made just prior to the arrival of the canines at the school.
3. The district may, at any time, utilize canines to search vehicles, possessions not on the student's person, desks, lockers and other school property, with or without reasonable suspicion. Canines utilized under the procedures of this policy will not be allowed to indiscriminately approach students or staff members.
4. Prior to entering a classroom to conduct a search using a canine, students will be instructed to leave the room.
5. A canine response indicating the presence of contraband constitutes reasonable suspicion and a more intrusive search may be conducted at the direction of the school administrators present.
6. In the event that a canine reacts during any search as herein set forth, the individual student will be summoned prior to any search of the property to which the canine issued a reaction (automobile, locker, desk, etc.). The student will be informed that the canine reacted and that a more intrusive search will be conducted in the presence of the student. In the event that the search produces evidence of illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, or other contraband, the student will be taken to the appropriate school office and the parent/guardian will be contacted to report to the school. Appropriate disciplinary action will be imposed pending presentation of the case to the Amite County Board of Education.

Searches-Generally

The Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and Article 3, §23 of the Mississippi Constitution provide all people with the right to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches. However, circumstances will arise where searches of students' persons, possessions, lockers, desks, and vehicles will be necessary. Administrators have the authority and obligation to exercise discretion in the implementation of this policy, balancing the district's responsibility to maintain discipline, order, and a safe environment conducive to education with the students' legitimate expectation of privacy.

Searches Permitted

All searches must be pre-approved by the Superintendent, principal, assistant principal, or acting principal. No other district employee may authorize a search except where an emergency situation exists.

At least two (2) district employees must be present while a search is conducted. If, in the discretion of the administrator or employee conducting the search, the search is particularly intrusive, the person conducting the search and the witnesses, or at least one of them, should be the same sex as the student.

No student other than the student who is the subject of the search may be present during the search. All searches must be reasonable in scope.

Searches are permitted as follows:

1. Person, Possessions, Lockers
Searches of a student's person, possessions or lockers may be conducted if a district employee has prior individualized reasonable suspicion that a student has violated or is violating a district policy, school rules or regulations or the law and that the search will result in discovery of evidence of such violation.
2. Desks, Other School Property

Searches of desks and other school property (except lockers) may be conducted at any time, with or without reasonable suspicion of a violation.

3. Vehicles

Searches of vehicles driven to school by or for students may be searched by visual inspection with or without reasonable suspicion of a violation. If a visual search results in individualized reasonable suspicion of a violation, a more intrusive search of the vehicle may be conducted at the direction of the principal or other administrator present.

4. Group Searches

Caution shall be exercised when a search involving a number of students is conducted. In most instances, in order to justify a search, the district's reasonable suspicion must be particularized to an individual student. Exceptions to this requirement are appropriate only where the intrusiveness of the search is minimal, such as canine searches of lockers, desks or book bags, automobiles, etc.

5. Strip Searches

No student shall be subjected to a strip search except where an emergency situation exists and with pre-approval of the school principal. No student shall be asked to remove any article of clothing in the presence of a member of the opposite sex or of other students.

6. Metal Detectors

Use of metal detectors to minimize the risk of weapons on campus is determined to be a desirable technique for campus security purposes. No student or teacher should be subject to the dangers inherent in a firearm, knife or other potentially dangerous object being carried onto the campus by another person.

A. Random Use of Detector

Metal detectors may be used either at random without cause at times to be determined by the campus principal or as otherwise prescribed by the district or they may be used for minor reasonable suspicion on a selective basis. Selection of students for a random sweep shall be demonstrably according to chance.

B. Avoidance of Detection Process

When a detector is in use at a particular entrance of a school and a student approaches the detection site and then attempts to avoid using that doorway, it shall be considered sufficient cause to immediately detain and frisk the student, following which the student and the student's belongings shall be subjected to the device.

c. Nothing in this policy requires the use of a metal detector, even if readily available, in preference to any other type of search.

7. Anyone who leaves campus with or without permission upon returning will be subject to search along with their vehicle. Anyone found in an unauthorized area of a campus will be subject to search.

Disciplinary Action

If a search reveals grounds for a reasonable belief that a violation of a district policy, school rules or regulations or the law has occurred, the student will be subject to disciplinary action as provided by district policy.

Police Searches

School officials are obligated to cooperate with law enforcement authorities who are validly carrying out their official duties. In such cases involving a student, the district shall make an immediate attempt to notify the student's parent, guardian, or custodian. The principal or the principal's designee shall attend the search if conducted on or about the school premises and shall take any disciplinary action necessary as a result of the search.

Legal Ref.: New Jersey v. T.L.O., 469 U.S. 325 (1985) Horton v. Goose Creek Independent School Dist., 690 F.2d 470 (5th Cir. 1982), cert. denied 103 S.Ct. 35 (1983) Tarter v. Raybuck, 742 F.2d 977 (6th Cir. 1984), cert. denied 105 S.Ct. 1749 1985.

Interrogations by School Officials

School administrators and teachers have the right to question a student regarding his/her conduct or the conduct of others. School officials may question/interrogate a student regarding his/her conduct or the conduct of others without the parent/guardian being present. Principals are required by law to act in loco parentis.

Interrogations by Law Enforcement Officials

Law enforcement personnel are not permitted to interrogate minor students on the school campus regarding alleged activities of the student or others away from the school campus that have caused law enforcement to become involved until such time as the principal/assistant principal has obtained permission from the student's parent/guardian.

Felony Charges

Any student charged with a felony may not participate in any extra-curricular activities and could be assigned to the alternative school.

Sexual Harassment

The Board of Education will not tolerate sexual harassment of or by students. Students who are guilty of threatening or sexually harassing other students or staff shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Insolence/Disrespect

Insolence (to be boldly disrespectful in speech or behavior) and general disrespect shall not be tolerated. Students are not permitted to intimidate or harass school personnel or other students. Students who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension.

Tobacco

Student use and/or possession of tobacco, in any form, **is not permitted on any campus of the Amite County School District nor upon any school bus operated by the district.** Students in violation of this policy are subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension.

Cheating/Stealing

Students are expected to do their own work. The unauthorized giving or receiving of help in any area of schoolwork will not be tolerated. Cheating is a serious disciplinary offense and students should leave no doubt in this area. The act of giving or receiving unauthorized help, including cheating, plagiarism, and copying, will result in a zero being assigned for the work. Stealing is a major violation of school disciplinary policy, and may result in criminal charges.

Forged Excuses, Notes, Etc.

Forgery of an administrator's, teacher's, or parent/guardian name to a school document or note shall result in appropriate disciplinary action.

Destroying/Defacing School Property

Equipment, facilities, books, and fixtures that make up the school campus are paid for by the taxpayers. Willful damage or destruction of school property shall not be tolerated. State law provides in Section 37-11-19/1953 Ex. Sec., 26 of the Mississippi Code of 1972 that:

“If a pupil shall willfully destroy, cut, deface, damage, or injure any school building, equipment or other school property, he/she shall be liable to suspension or expulsion and his/her parents or persons in loco parentis (in place of the parents) shall be liable for all damages.”

The punishment for such destruction of school property may include replacement of the property by the parent/guardian, renovation and/or repair of the property destroyed or damaged by the parent/guardian, and/or suspension/expulsion of the student from school.

Gambling

Gambling, in any form, on the school campus or at a school activity is strictly prohibited.

Cafeteria Behavior

All students must respect the rights of others in the lunch line. Students are to return trays so that the tables will be clear for those students following. Students must sit in assigned areas and behave properly at all times. Pushing, shoving, or “breaking” of the lunch line is not permitted. Disrespect to cafeteria workers will not be tolerated. Students who misbehave in the cafeteria are subject to disciplinary action by the administration and/or faculty.

Trespassing

Campuses are closed 15 minutes after school dismissal. Only those involved in supervised school activities are permitted on campus. **Students who are found on the school grounds at unauthorized times will be placed on the district discipline plan under school policy and will be subject to arrest.** In all instances of such vandalism, restitution will be the responsibility of the students and their parents. Students who are assigned to out-of-school suspension, recommended for expulsion, or expelled but are on campus unaccompanied by a parent/guardian will be considered as trespassing.

Leaving Campus and/or Failing to Report to Class without Permission

Leaving campus and/or failing to report to any assigned class, commonly called “skipping,” is a major disciplinary offense and students leaving campus and/or failing to report to assigned areas/classes without proper permission from the school office shall be subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension.

Other Student Information

Possession of Pagers, Cellular Phones, Radios, or other Electronic Devices

Students are not permitted to bring electronic items on the campuses. Students in possession of electronic games, pagers, beepers, portable cell phones, or other electronic devices shall have: 1st offense-such item(s) confiscated and held until parents/guardians meet with the principal/assistant principal and may also be subject to other disciplinary action; 2nd offense-such item(s) confiscated and held for 30 days and held until parents/guardians meet with the principal/assistant principal and may also be subject to other disciplinary action; 3rd offense - such item(s) confiscated for the duration of the school year and may be subject to other disciplinary action.

Personal Possessions

Students are expected to care for their own possessions and to keep up with personal belongings. The school district cannot be responsible for loss, theft, or damage to personal belongings. However, when properly reported, school officials will, if possible, assist the student in locating lost or stolen property within the limits of their ability to do so.

Automobile/Motorized Vehicle Use

Students younger than grade 10 may not bring a motorized vehicle on any school campus.

Public Displays of Affection

Public displays of affection on school grounds are not permissible and will result in disciplinary action.

Student Demonstrations/Strikes/Sit-In Activities, Etc.

The Board is responsible for providing an appropriate education program. The right of a child to attend school and receive an educational program is mandated by law. The Board will not tolerate any disruption or interference with that right through the use of violence, vandalism, seizure of any area of school property, sit-in activities, walkouts, strikes, or other methods of demonstration which disrupts the operation of the school.

Messages and Gifts to Students from Parents/Guardians and Others

Except in the case of emergency, classes cannot be interrupted by messages to students from parents/guardians or others. PLEASE DO NOT ASK THAT THIS BE DONE EXCEPT IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS. Such disruptions interfere with instruction and result in loss of time and concentration. Arrangements for family matters should be made in the home, not at school or through the school office. No message will be delivered except from the parent/guardian. If a true emergency necessitates a message to a student, the school office will deliver that message. Further, the district recognizes the enjoyment students get by receiving gifts on special occasions. However, such deliveries to students can cause problems for school personnel. Because of safety issues, balloons are not allowed on school buses. Students may not distribute personal correspondence at school.

Use of School Office Telephones

School office phones are business phones. Students will not be allowed to use school office phones except in case of an emergency or illness. Calls for missing materials, homework, etc. will not be allowed.

Extra Curricular Policies and Procedures

I. PURPOSE

We believe that the opportunity for participation in a wide variety of student-selected activities is a **vital part of a student's educational experiences. Such participation is a privilege that carries with it responsibilities to the school, the activity, to other students, to the community and to the students themselves. These experiences contribute to the development of learning skills, leadership training and emotional patterns that enable the student to achieve maximum benefit from his or her education. The Amite County School District's extra curricular program is considered a supplement to the school's academic program which strives to provide experiences that will help to develop students physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally.**

AMITE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT STUDENT DISCIPLINE PLAN

The Amite County Board of Education has categorized six classes of behavioral standards and authorized disciplinary consequences for all students. Student deviant behavior shall be recorded in the student data base/records. When a student misbehaves and/or demonstrates unacceptable behaviors, the student may face consequences or their behavior based on the behavior standards. The behavior standards **do not** reflect a step-to-step approach. For example, if the student commits a serious infraction, the consequences do not start with Class I but will escalate up the ladder to the appropriate standard. Additionally, students who habitually abuse a lower level standard will advance to a higher-level standard and face the consequences of the higher-level standard. Administrators have the discretion to use their professional judgment in the management of discipline based upon the circumstances. This authority applies to the selection of the consequences in relation to the severity of the student's actions. Habitual violations of a behavior standard move the consequence of the behavior to a higher level.

Class I Behavior Standards

Each student in the Amite County School District is expected to conduct himself/herself in an appropriate manner. Behaviors below are considered violations of the Code of Conduct under Class I Behavior Standards:

1. Using abusive language related to another student or school employee that is spoken, written, or gestured
2. Excessively distracting other students
3. Violating the student dress code as outlined in Section IV of the Code of Conduct
4. Having membership in fraternities, sororities, and secret societies or gang activity
5. Being unlawfully absent or tardy
6. Displaying inappropriate affection in public
7. Failing to bring classroom materials, homework, or other required items
8. Engaging in personal contact such as pushing and shoving
9. Possession of any item(s) containing pornographic content
10. Possession of cell phone or other electronic device
11. Dress code violation
12. Eating or drinking in class
13. Unauthorized fundraising
14. Defiance/disrespectful behavior toward administration, faculty and staff
15. Cheating
16. Gum chewing
17. Littering
18. Improper hallway conduct (running in halls, boisterous activities in halls, being in the hall without permission)
19. Cheating

Authorized Disciplinary Consequences for Violating Class I Behavior Standards*

1. Teacher gives warning
2. Teacher-student conference
3. Teacher isolates student providing adult supervision
4. Teacher contacts parents
5. Teacher-parent conference
6. Teacher recommends individual and/or group counseling
7. Administrative student/parent/teacher conference
8. In-School Suspension
9. Other appropriate action deemed necessary by the principal or assistant principal

*All the authorized disciplinary consequences listed above are available for school staff as they deal with students who violate behavior standards. The nature and severity of individual student actions will determine any final disciplinary action.

Class II Behavior Standards

1. Habitual Violations of Class I behavior standards (three or more violations)
2. Using, possessing, or handling tobacco or tobacco-related products (Ex.: matches, lighter, etc.)
3. Defacing school property (Ex: writing on desks or walls, etc.)
4. Stealing (Under \$10.00 in value)
5. Using vulgar or profane language, acts and/or gestures
6. Cutting Class/Leaving Campus without permission
7. Eating/drinking in unapproved areas on campus
8. Improper use of lockers
9. Going to cars without permission
10. Possession of cell phone or other electronic devices
11. Lying to authorities
12. Defiance of administrator/teacher/staff, disrespect/continuous disobedience
13. Improper/disruptive behavior on school grounds or at school activities or traveling to and from school activities

Authorized Disciplinary Consequences for Violating Class II Behavior Standards*

1. Contact parents. Parents are financially liable for a child's destructive acts toward school property or persons. If the school requests, the parent(s) will be required to attend a disciplinary conference regarding acts of their children. Parents who willfully fail to attend a properly noticed conference may be guilty of a misdemeanor. (Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-53)
2. Loss of privileges to all school activities (Ex: field trips, assemblies, class parties, etc.)
3. A twenty-day probation period violation will result in movement to Class III, IV, or V
4. Total restitution for any injury to others requiring medical attention, items stolen or damaged
5. The principal may request that the parent attend classes with the student.

6. In-school suspension, out-of-school suspension and/or any other appropriate action deemed necessary by the principal

*All the authorized disciplinary consequences listed above are available for school staff as they deal with students who violate behavior standards. The nature and severity of individual student actions will determine any final disciplinary action.

Class III Behavior Standards

1. Habitual violation of Class II behavior standards (three or more violations)
2. Harassing, intimidating, hazing, stalking, or threatening other students or school employees
3. Vandalizing school property (non-gang related)
4. Fighting (minor, little or no injury)
5. Spreading rumors/gossip which leads to verbal/physical confrontation/disruptions/disturbances in school, during school activities, and/or aboard a school bus
6. Visiting other schools without permission, which is considered trespassing
7. Stealing-over \$10.00 value
8. Intentionally providing false information to any school employee or member of the school board
9. Conspiring to or creating a disturbance in the classroom, on the bus, on school property, or any school function
10. Propositioning someone, either verbally or in writing, to engage in a sexual act
11. Habitually leaving school without permission, cutting class, or not following proper procedures in leaving campus
12. Refusing to surrender any item(s) not allowed at school
13. Being insubordinate, showing disrespect for authority or willfully being disobedient
14. Profanity/vulgarity (Includes acts, gestures, symbols)
15. Use of forged documents such as parent notes, report cards, hall passes, etc.

Authorized Disciplinary Consequences for Violating Class III Behavior Standards*

1. In-School Suspension; Failure to report to ISS will result in a three-day out-of-school suspension.
2. Three (3) to five (5) days out-of-school suspension
3. Contact parent for conference. Recommend professional counseling. When counseling is proposed, proof of counseling may be requested before student reenters school.
4. Total restitution for any injury to others requiring medical attention, items stolen or damaged
5. Loss of privileges to school activities
6. Out-of-school suspension in addition to other appropriate actions deemed necessary by the principal
7. The principal may request that the parent attend classes with his/her child in lieu of suspension
8. Habitual violators of Class III behavior standards may receive up to the (10) days of suspension, followed by a twenty (20) day probation period upon return to school

*All the authorized disciplinary consequences listed above are available for school staff as they deal with students who violate behavior standards. The nature and severity of individual student actions will determine any final disciplinary action.

Class IV Behavior Standards

1. Habitual violation of Class III Behavior Standards (three or more violations)
2. Burglarizing or unlawfully possession school property
3. Possessing or using fireworks
4. Extorting
5. Gambling
6. Fighting (Ex. Three or more students involved)
7. Using abusive language or abusive behavior to district personnel
8. Intimidating by placing someone in fear of their safety/bullying
9. Vandalizing school property (gang related, gang graffiti)
10. Committing burglary of a vehicle or unauthorized use of a vehicle parked on or near school property with the intent to commit theft
11. Making a bomb threat, setting off a fire alarm, or vocalizing a false fire alarm
12. Committing any other offense which the principal may reasonably judge in his/her professional opinion to fall within this category (Ex.: any act committed in the community that adversely affects the school climate and habitual violations of Class I, II, III behavior standards)

*Authorized Disciplinary Consequences for Violating Class IV Behavior Standards**

1. Ten (10) or more days suspension, followed by twenty (20) days probation upon returning to school
2. Long-term suspension with recommendation of placement at the alternative school program, followed by semester-equivalent probation
3. Total restitution for any injury to others requiring medical attention, items stolen or damaged
4. Other appropriate action deemed necessary by the principal or assistant principal

*All the authorized disciplinary consequences listed above are available for school staff as they deal with students who violate behavior standards. The nature and severity of individual student actions will determine any final disciplinary action.

Class V Behavior Standards

1. Habitual violations of Class IV behavior standards (three or more violations)
2. Burglarizing or unlawful possession of school property
3. Possessing, selling, or distributing alcohol on school campus (This includes traveling on buses, school activities and athletic events, etc.)
4. Using alcohol (This includes traveling on buses, school activities and athletic events, etc.)
 - a. First offense will be suspension for three (3) to five (5) days
 - b. Second offense will be a recommendation for a long-term suspension or expulsion
5. Possessing any item that has the shape, form or appearance of or intended use as a weapon
6. Physically and/or verbally assaulting students, teachers, administrators, or other staff members

7. Using any written, gestured, or verbal communication to threaten students, teachers, administrators, or other staff members
8. Participating in or causing a disturbance at school or school-related activities (Ex: riot, group/gang fights, fights or similar disturbances that are not gang related, etc.)
9. Engaging in a sexual act or committing an obscene act
10. Committing robbery
11. Possessing or using bullets
12. Committing arson
13. Poisoning

Authorized Disciplinary Consequences for Violating Class V Behavior Standards*

1. Long-term out-of-school suspension (more than ten days-must be approved by the superintendent)
2. Expulsion (Expulsion is defined as the complete loss of all privileges to attend school in the K-12 program.)
3. Other appropriate action deemed necessary by the principal or assistant principal
4. Students who meet the entrance requirements for the alternative program may be considered for admission into the alternative school in lieu of expulsion; however, the severity of the action must be considered in relation to safety to the student's presence in the alternative school.
5. Any compulsory school-age child who becomes involved in any criminal or violent behavior shall be removed from such alternative program, and with probable cause, the case will be referred to law enforcement and to Youth Court.
6. The principal may make a referral to the District Discipline Committee for a due process hearing for review of a recommendation for expulsion (parents notified by district office). The District Discipline Committee is authorized to review the evidence presented by the principal and make a recommendation to the superintendent in regards to the request for expulsion of the student. If the superintendent concurs with the recommendation of the principal and District Discipline Committee, the recommendation will be presented to the Board of Education. The superintendent shall be responsible for notifying the student's parents in writing stating the reason for the recommended expulsion, the date, time, and location of the meeting, and the student's rights to appear before the School Board and to have an attorney present at the expense of the student's parents.
7. While on expelled or suspended status, a student is not allowed to enter the campus or building of any Amite County School during or outside of school hours, nor may the student attend any school-related activities on or off school property. To do so may make the student liable for arrest on grounds of trespassing as well as jeopardizing such future chance of readmission to the school district.

*All the authorized disciplinary consequences listed above are available for school staff as they deal with students who violate behavior standards. The nature and severity of individual student actions will determine any final disciplinary action.

Class VI Behavior Standards

Each student in the Amite County School District is expected to conduct himself/herself in an appropriate manner and not violate state law that pertains to:

1. Possessing or using a deadly weapon
2. Possessing, selling, or using any controlled substance

3. Possession any dynamite cartridge, bomb, grenade, mine or powerful explosive
4. Assault resulting in serious physical injury or simple assault on any school employee or student
5. Sexual assault or sexual battery as defined under Mississippi law
6. Rape
7. Kidnapping
8. Indecent liberties with a minor as defined in Miss. Code Ann §97-5-23
9. Assault involving the use of a weapon
10. Possession a firearm in violation of the law
11. Murder

NOTE: A weapon includes BB gun, air rifle, air pistol, Bowie knife, dirk, dagger, slingshot, leading cane, switchblade, knife, blackjack, metallic or brass knuckles, razors and razor blades, and any sharp-pointed or edged instrument except for those used as instructional supplies, unaltered nail files, and clips and tools used solely for food preparation, instruction, and maintenance on educational property Miss. Code Ann. §97-37-14.

Authorized disciplinary Consequences for Violating Class VI Behavior Standards

Students in any school who possess any controlled substance in violation of the Uniform Control Substance Law, a knife, handgun or other firearm or any other instrument considered to be dangerous and capable of causing bodily harm or who commit a violent act on school property as defined in Miss. Code Ann. §97-37-17, shall be subject to automatic expulsion for one calendar year by the superintendent or principal from such school. The superintendent may modify the period of time on a case-by-case basis. Such expulsion shall take effect immediately subject to the constitutional rights of due process. Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-18.

The superintendent or designee must immediately report to law enforcement agencies when there is a reasonable belief that an unlawful activity has occurred on school property or during a school activity. The superintendent or designee may be fined up to \$1,000.00, jailed for six months, or both, for failure to report. When a report is received, law enforcement must immediately dispatch an officer and an arrest may be made if there is probable cause. Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-29.

GUN-FREE SCHOOLS

The Amite County School District operates in compliance with the Gun-Free School Act, Title VIII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Therefore, all policies and procedures adopted by the Board of Education that affect the conduct and/or discipline of students are supplemented by the requirements of this act, as follows:

Section I: FIRMARMS PROHIBITED

No student is permitted to bring or possess a firearm on school property.

Section II: DEFINITIONS

A “firearm” means any type of weapon, including a starter gun, which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; the frame or receiver of any such weapon, any firearm muffler or firearm silencer, and destructive device, including any explosive, incendiary, poisonous gas, bomb, grenade, rocket, missile, mine, or other similar device; and any type of weapon, any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described above and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled, or as otherwise defined by federal law.

Obviously toy weapons are excluded from the provisions of this policy.

“School property” including any school building, bus, campus, grounds, recreational area, athletic field, or other property owned, used, or operated by the district.

Section III: DISCIPLINARY ACTION

A student who is charged with bringing or possessing a firearm on school property shall be subject to expulsion from the regular and/or alternative school program and all of its activities for a minimum period of one calendar year. The suspension shall take effect immediately following the provision of initial due process and pending the conclusion of due process on the recommendation of expulsion, all in accordance with policy and all others subsequently adopted by the Board of Education.

The superintendent who receives a recommendation for expulsion may determine, based upon the particular circumstances of a given case, that other disciplinary actions or alternative placement is appropriate and may make such recommendation to the Board of Education. Otherwise, the superintendent shall submit the recommendation of expulsion to the Board of Education for final action.

Section IV: READMISSION

A student who is expelled for bringing a firearm on school property must apply for readmission to the regular or alternative school program. Readmission may be granted by the Board of Education upon a documented showing that the student has participated in successful rehabilitative efforts including but not limited to progress in an alternative school, juvenile correction facility, or similar program.

This requirement for readmission after expulsion does not pertain to expulsion related to firearms only. All other cases in which a student has been expelled by the Board of Education must be appealed to the Board after the expulsion period has ended for a determination of readmission.

Section V: REPORTING

Violations of the firearm prohibitive stated in this policy shall be reported. In conjunction, the superintendent or designee shall notify the appropriate law enforcement officials of any unlawful activity that occurred on educational property or during a school-related activity

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

During the time students are out of the regular school program for more than ten (10) days, the district shall offer an alternative program. The alternative program shall be offered for expelled students and students who have been suspended for more than ten (10) days **(except for students expelled for possession of a weapon or other felonious conduct)**, students with disciplinary problems who have been referred by their parents, and compulsory-age students who have been referred to the school by a youth court judge with the consent of the school district. The coordinator of the alternative program must seek verification from the students’ guidance counselors regarding the suitability of such students for attendance at the alternative school. Transportation to the alternative program will be provided by the district where required by law. Students who have been expelled or suspended by the district and who are assigned to the alternative program shall be considered enrolled students and shall be subject to appropriate enrollment and attendance requirements of the district.

Students who become involved in any criminal or violent behavior will be removed from the alternative school, and if probable cause exists, the case will be referred to Youth Court.

It is the policy of the Amite County School District to immediately remove from the conventional classroom setting, subject to the appropriate due process requirements, any student who is chronically disruptive to the instructional process, whose presence has an adverse effect on or severely hinders or retards the academic development of other students, or who is not progressing towards high school completion, to some alternative setting or program with greater potential for the success of that student. Students who are arrested for violent crimes and drug offenses may be reassigned to the Alternative Program until the disposition of their criminal case.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

According to state law, if any student shall willfully destroy, cut, deface, damage, or injure any school building, equipment or other school property, he/she shall be liable for suspension or expulsion and his parent shall be liable for all damages.

A parent, guardian, or custodian of a compulsory school-age child enrolled in a public school district may be requested to appear at school by an appropriate school official for a conference regarding the student's destructive acts against school property or persons or the student's disciplinary problems.

A parent, guardian, or custodian of a compulsory school-age child enrolled in a public school district who has been summoned by proper notification by the superintendent shall be required to attend such discipline conferences. A parent, guardian or custodian who willfully fails to attend a disciplinary conference may be guilty of a misdemeanor.

A parent, guardian, or custodian of a compulsory school-age child enrolled in a public school district shall be responsible for any criminal fines brought against the student for unlawful activity as defined in Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-29 occurring on school grounds. Unlawful activity means any of the following:

- Possession or use of a deadly weapon;
- Possession, sale, or use of any controlled substance;
- Aggravated assault;
- Simple assault upon any school employee or student;
- Rape, sexual battery, or murder;
- Kidnapping;
- Fondling, touching, or handling a child for lustful purposes.

Any parent, guardian, or custodian of a compulsory-school-age child who refuses or willfully fails to perform any of the duties imposed upon him or her under the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be fined an amount not to exceed \$3,500.00.

A public school district is entitled to recover damages in an amount not to exceed (\$20,000.00) plus necessary court costs from the parents of any child between the ages of 7 and 17 who maliciously and willfully damages or destroys property belonging to that school district. However, this section does not apply to parents whose parental control of such child has been removed by court order or decree. These damages are in addition to any other recovery.

References: Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-19, 37-11-53, 97-37-1, 97-3-7, 37-11-29, 37-11-59.

IT IS THE PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE PHONE NUMBERS WHERE THEY CAN BE REACHED. IT IS ALSO THE PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK THEIR CHILDREN'S BOOK BAGS EACH MORNING BEFORE CHILDREN LEAVE HOME FOR SCHOOL.

SCHOOL VIOLENCE

In an effort to prevent the escalation of school violence, the legislature passed several new laws that severely impact the responsibilities of both parents and students. This portion of the Student Code of Conduct and Discipline Plan is designed to highlight these laws.

AUTOMATIC EXPULSION

Any student in any school who possesses any controlled substance in violation of the Uniform Control Substances Law, a knife, handgun, other firearm or any other instrument considered to be dangerous and capable of causing bodily harm or who commits a violent act on school property shall be subject to automatic expulsion for one calendar year by the superintendent from such school district. However, the superintendent may modify the period of time on a case-by-case basis. Such expulsion shall take effect immediately subject to the constitutional rights of due process. Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-18.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR UNLAWFUL ACTIVITY

Any school employee who has knowledge of any unlawful activity which occurred or may have occurred on educational property or during a school-related activity must report such activity to the superintendent to the principal who will then report to the superintendent. The superintendent shall notify the appropriate law enforcement officials. If the superintendent is out of the district and is unavailable during the reporting

period, the principal shall be authorized to sign the appropriate reports and forward them to law enforcement.

When the superintendent or designee has a reasonable belief that an act has occurred, on education property or during a school-related activity involving possession or use of a deadly weapon, possession, sale or use of any controlled substance, aggravated assault, simple assault on a school employee, rape, sexual battery, murder, kidnapping, or fondling, touching or handling a child for lustful purposes, the superintendent or designee shall immediately report the act to the appropriate law enforcement agency. School property shall include any public school building, bus, public school campus, grounds, recreational area, or athletic field in the charge of the superintendent. Reports required under this law shall be made on a form prescribed by the State Department of Education, Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-29. A superintendent who fails to make a report required by this law may be fined up to \$1,000.00 and jailed for up to six (6) months, or both. Miss. Code Ann. . § 37-11-35.

The law enforcement agency shall immediately dispatch an officer to the educational institute and with probable cause, the officers are authorized to make an arrest. Miss. Code Ann. § 37-11-29.

Any superintendent, principal, teacher, or other school employee who participates in the making of the required report or who participates in any judicial proceeds resulting there from is presumed to be acting in good faith. Any person reporting an act in good faith shall be immune from any civil liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed. Miss. Code Ann., §37-11-29.

The superintendent must notify, in writing, the parent, guardian or custodian, the youth court and local law enforcement of any expulsion of a student for criminal activity defined in Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-29. The superintendent must also notify the youth court and local law enforcement agencies by affidavit of the commission of any crime by student or students upon school property or during any school-related activity regardless of the location and names of the students who committed the crime. Miss. Code Ann. §37-9-14.

Law enforcement agencies, judges, and courts must notify the superintendent of the school district when a student is arrested, or lawfully charges with, or convicted of a crime. If the charge upon which the student was arrested or any other charges against him are dismissed, or if upon trial, the student is either convicted or acquitted, this disposition shall also be reported to the superintendent. The report must be made within one (1) week after the arrest, dismissal, conviction, or acquittal. This reporting requirement does not apply to ordinary traffic violations involving a fine of less than \$50.00. Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-29.

The law enforcement reports to the school district must contain the student's name, address, and school, place, date and time of arrest, the charge against him, the bail status, and disposition, if any. Miss. Code Ann. §37-11-31.

ENROLLMENT OF STUDENT WHO HAS BEEN EXPELLED FROM SCHOOL

When a student applies for admission or enrollment in any public school, the parent, guardian, or student must indicate on the school registration form if the student has been expelled from any public or private school or is currently a party to an expulsion proceeding. If the cumulative record or application for admission or enrollment shows that the student has been expelled, the school district shall deny the student admission until the superintendent or designee has reviewed the cumulative record and determined that the student has participated in successful rehabilitative efforts including, but not limited to, progress in an alternative school, juvenile correctional facility, or similar program.

If the student is a party to an expulsion proceeding, the child may be admitted pending the final disposition of the expulsion proceedings as determined by the Board of Education. If the expulsion proceedings result in the expulsion of that student, the public school shall revoke his/her admission to school.

If the student were expelled or is a party to an expulsion proceeding for an act which involves violence, weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, or other activity that may result in expulsion, the school district shall not be required to grant admission or enrollment to the student before one (1) year after the date of the expulsion. Miss. Code § 37-15-9.

The Board of Education has the authority and power to designate or assign the student to the regular or alternative school setting. Miss. Code Ann. §37-15-13.

Use of Corporal Punishment

School administrators or teachers in the Amite County School District may administer corporal punishment on students who are insubordinate or disobedient, or who violate a rule of the school. Any administration of corporal punishment shall be in a reasonable manner and applied only to the student's buttocks in such a manner that there will be no permanent effects. Reasonable administration of corporal punishment shall be determined considering the age, size, sex, and general physical strength of the student; the size of the person administering the punishment; the nature of the offense; and the type of instrument used to administer the punishment. Further, corporal punishment shall never be administered to any student except in the presence of another certificated employee of this school district and using only paddles furnished by the school district. Further, corporal punishment shall not be administered in any manner that would unduly embarrass the student (e.g. in the presence of other students).

A parent/guardian of a child enrolled in the Amite County School District shall have the right to request that their child not receive corporal punishment at school. It shall be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to present such request, in writing, to the school principal/assistant principal by SEPTEMBER 1 OF EACH SCHOOL YEAR. The request submitted will only be valid for the school year in which it is submitted and must be re-submitted each year in which the parent/guardian does not wish corporal punishment to be administered. Further, parents/guardians who submit such request shall do so with the understanding that the school will honor the request but that if the child misbehaves in a manner which warrants the administration of corporal punishment, then such student may be suspended by the principal/assistant principal.

Disciplinary action in lieu of or in addition to corporal punishment may include in-school suspension, suspension from school, referral to social services officials, or other appropriate disciplinary measures, including the requirement that the parent or legal guardian attend classes with the child to help parents/guardians develop the skills necessary to facilitate the child's continued enrollment in the regular school program and successful participation in classroom activities.

Expulsion

The Board of Education may expel any student for conduct that disrupts the educational process or endangers the health or safety of any student, his/her classmates, or any school personnel. Only the Board may expel a student from school attendance and the board may only take such action after having afforded the student recommended for expulsion with all due process to which the student is entitled.

Recommendation for expulsion must be made by the school principal to the Superintendent and/or District Discipline Committee to be submitted to the Board of Education for their action. Notice of the date, time, and location of the Board hearing shall be given in writing to the parent/guardian and student.

Acts of Violence, Inciting Violence, Threats of Violence, Bullying, Hazing, Fighting and/or Disruption of Educational Process

Violent acts, inciting violent acts, threats of violence, and/or other acts that disrupt the educational process/school related activities are strictly prohibited. Such acts are totally unacceptable behavior which result in the disruption of normal school operation and, in some cases, can endanger the safety and general welfare of other students and staff members. Hazing, whether it occurs at school or away from school, if it is related in any way to school and/or school activities, will not be tolerated and the student will be disciplined as if the action occurred at school. Violent acts (including fighting), inciting violence, and/or threats of violence, are considered to be a major breach of school decorum and will not be tolerated.

Such acts are dealt with in accordance with the seriousness of the incident, the age of the student(s) involved, the number of students participating in the episode, and the extent to which the student(s) are cooperative in following the instructions of administration and staff in ending the incident. In almost all cases, some disciplinary action will be imposed by the principal/assistant principal. A parent conference will be required and a threat assessment may be recommended. For seriously violent situations law

enforcement officials will be contacted and the student(s) will be placed on Class 5 or higher of the discipline plan. Principals/assistant principals are fully authorized to file necessary criminal charges against students involved in such acts if in their discretion the same is warranted.

Threatening, Extortion, Intimidation

Section 37-11-20: Intimidation, threatening or coercion of students for purpose of interfering with attendance of classes. It shall be unlawful for any person to intimidate, threaten, or coerce, or attempt to intimidate, threaten, or coerce, whether by illegal force, threats of force or by the distribution of intimidating, threatening or coercive material, any person enrolled in any school for the purpose of interfering with the right of that person to attend school classes or of causing him not to attend such classes. Upon conviction of violation of any provision of this section, such individual shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be subject to a fine of not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500.00), imprisonment in jail for a period not to exceed six (6) months or both. Any person under the age of seventeen (17) years who violates any provision of this section shall be treated as a delinquent within the jurisdiction of the youth court.

Students are not permitted to make threats against other students or school personnel, whether overt or implied. Students are not allowed to extort money, favors, or something of value from other students or staff, regardless of the amount of value, in return for protection or in connection with a threat to inflict harm. Such behavior is a violation of school policy and students in violation are subject to disciplinary action. This statement will apply on school grounds, before, during, and after school, or any time when the school is being used by a school group. It is also applicable off school grounds at school-sponsored events or when the prohibited behavior is a consequence of or directly related to causes or events which occurred or originated on the school campus.

Cyber stalking

1. It is unlawful for a person to:

- Use in electronic mail or electronic communication any words or language threatening to inflict bodily harm to any person or that person's child, sibling, spouse, or dependent, or physical injury to the property of any person, or for the purpose of extorting money or other things of value from any person.
- Electronically mail or electronically communicate to another repeatedly, whether or not the conversation ensues, for the purpose of threatening, terrifying or harassing any person.
- Electronically mail or electronically communicate to another and to knowingly make any false statement concerning death, injury, illness, disfigurement, indecent conduct, or criminal conduct of the person electronically mailed or of any member of the person's family or household with the intent to threaten, terrify or harass.
- Knowingly permit an electronic communication device under the person's control to be used for any purpose prohibited by this section.

2. Whoever commits the offense of cyber stalking shall be punished, upon conviction:

- Except as provided herein, the person is guilty of a felony punishable by imprisonment for not more than two (2) years or a fine of not more than Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00), or both:
- If any of the following apply, the person is guilty of a felony punishable by imprisonment for not more than five (5) years or a fine of not more than Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00), or both.

Carrying Weapons

It is recognized that the possession of pistols, firearms or other weapons on school premises or at school functions by persons other than duly authorized law enforcement officials creates an unreasonable and

unwarranted risk of injury or death to district employees, students, visitors and guests and further creates an unreasonable and unwarranted risk of damage to properties of district employees, students, visitors, and guests. Because of such dangers, the board hereby prohibits the possession of pistols, firearms, or weapons in any form by any person other than duly authorized law enforcement officials on school premises or at school functions, regardless of whether any such person possesses a valid permit to carry such pistols, firearms or weapons.

Any student who has in his/her possession an object that would be classified as a weapon while he/she is in school, on school grounds, or on a school bus traveling to or from school will immediately be suspended by the principal and subject to expulsion by the board.

Possession of Weapons on School Property

Guns

The Amite County Board of Education adopted a policy which requires the expulsion from school for a period of not less than one calendar year of any student who brings a firearm to school; expulsion being defined according to the Guns Free School Act of 1994 as either expelling or the placement of a student in an alternative program if it is located at a campus other than where the violation occurred.

Any student who has in his/her possession any type of gun, operable or inoperable, while he/she is in school, or on school property, on the school bus on the way to or from school or at any school function or activity will immediately be suspended and recommended for expulsion. Such recommendation will be initiated by the principal of the school where the violation occurred and/or the principal of the school to which the offending student is assigned.

Guns in student possession shall be seized and turned over to the school district's security officer. Appropriate law enforcement authorities and the superintendent of education shall be notified of each violation of this policy.

Other Weapons - Use of

Any student who uses or threatens to use any hard or sharp object, regardless of its original purpose, for a weapon while he/she is in school, on school property, on the school bus, on the way to and from school on a school bus or at any school function or activity, will immediately be suspended and recommended for expulsion. Examples of such weapons, but not limited to, include knife, billy club, brass knuckles, and ammunition, throwing stars, pipe club, brick, bat, chain, razors, box cutters, etc.

Weapons used by students or threatened to be used by students shall be seized and turned over to the principal. Principals shall exercise their own discretion in each instance concerning the necessity of the notification of the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Other Weapons- Possession of

Possession, by student, of any hard or sharp object, regardless of its original purpose, that may be considered a weapon while he/she is in school, on school property, on the school bus, on the way to and from school on a school bus or any school function or activity shall be considered in violation of this policy. Suspensions or other punishment for violation of this section of the policy shall be awarded by the principal who shall deal with each individual case based on circumstances. Weapons in possession shall be seized.

Students who violate this policy shall be afforded all due process rights and procedures provided by any and all policies of the school district. However, suspensions awarded by the provisions of this policy shall not be delayed or postponed because of tests and/or examinations.

Conduct on the School Bus

The school bus drivers are employees of the Amite County School System and have a tremendous responsibility. Students are expected to show the driver courtesy and respect at all times. Students are under the supervision of the Amite County School District whenever they ride the school bus and will not be allowed to leave the school bus at any point between the school and their legal place of residence unless under specific instructions to the driver by the principal or his designee. Permission to get off of the school bus at another destination other than the student's legal place of residence will require a written request to

the principal from the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s). All students riding a public school bus are under the supervision of the Amite County School District from the time he or she arrives on the school bus as well as on the return trip from school to the place of residency. At no time will students be allowed to leave the school bus to go to a store or any place other than his/her residence.

Pupil Rules: Disciplinary Guidelines in accordance with Section 37-41-1 of Mississippi Code of 1972

All students are expected to abide by the following rules when loading and unloading from a school bus and while waiting for the bus:

1. Be at the assigned loading zone on time.
2. Exercise extreme caution in getting to and from the assigned bus stop.
3. Look in both directions before stepping from behind parked cars.
4. Stay well off the roadway until the bus comes to a complete stop and the bus driver indicates that it is safe to come aboard.
5. Do not play on or near the road while waiting for the bus to arrive.
6. Never walk on the road while when there is a sidewalk or pathway.
7. Always walk on the left side of the road facing oncoming traffic and step off the road when a motor vehicle nears.
8. Wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before trying to unload.
9. Use the handrail while getting on and off the bus.
10. Walk in an orderly line and avoid horseplay.
11. Go directly to an available or assigned seat directly upon entering the bus.
12. If possible, wear white or light colored clothing so that all motorists will be aware of your presence.
13. When crossing the road to enter the bus or after leaving the bus, always cross in front of the bus.
14. Unauthorized persons will not be allowed on school bus.

All students are expected to obey the following rules while riding on the school bus:

1. Upon boarding the bus, students should go to their assigned seats and remain seated while the bus is in motion.
2. Students must remain seated and keep all isles and exits clear.
3. Students must respect the rights and safety of others.
4. Students must refrain from leaving or boarding the bus at locations other than the assigned stops at home or school.
5. Do not distract the driver's attention unless completely necessary.
6. Talk to your friends in a normal tone and please do not shout. Also, do not talk or make unnecessary noise when the bus is approaching and crossing an intersection.
7. All students should keep their head, hands and articles inside the school bus.
8. Students shall refrain from hitching rides via the bumper or other parts of the bus.
9. Do not bring unauthorized articles on the school bus (for example: pets, weapons, combustibles, radios, tapes, food, drinks, "R" rated materials. These will be turned over to the principal.) **Exception: If the student's Individualized Educational Plan requires a special needs student to use a service dog, for mobility or medical purposes, then the assigned animal will be permitted on the bus.**
10. Students should refrain from the use of profane language, obscene gestures, tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or any other controlled substance on the school bus.
11. Do not fight or scuffle.
12. Students must refrain from throwing or passing objects on, from, or into buses.
13. Students shall exhibit classroom conduct at all times while riding a school bus.
14. Pupils should refrain from eating or drinking on the school bus.
15. A student is permitted to carry only items that can be held in his/her lap.
16. Be courteous to and follow the directions of the bus driver.
17. Do not cut or in any way deface or damage seats. Destruction of school property will not be tolerated.
- 18: **All students are subject to the Student Conduct and Discipline Policies as stated in this handbook for all school property including school buses.**

Remember: It is each student's privilege to ride a public school bus. **When a student violates any of the rules or regulations concerning school bus conduct, he or she may be immediately and indefinitely**

suspended from riding the school bus. In the case of major and illegal offenses, the suspension will be immediate.

- First offense-----Counsel
- Second offense-----Ten (10) days
- Third offense-----Thirty (30) days
- Fourth offense-----Expulsion from bus for school year

The school principal has the discretionary authority to use the following methods to assure proper school bus behavior:

1. Suspend the student from riding the school bus for a specific period of time.
2. Require the student to replace or repair any damages to school bus (broken windows, cut seats, writing on seats or walls, etc.)
3. Refer the student to the Superintendent of Education or the Board of Education.
4. Require the student to remain after school.
5. Use corporal punishment if deemed necessary.
6. Assign an in-school and/or out-of-school suspension.
7. **Require any other appropriate action on each individual case based on the seriousness of the violation. Illegal actions shall be reported to the Superintendent of Education for referral to law enforcement officials. Principals and assistant principals are granted the authority to skip steps pertaining to the consequences of each offense as stated above in accordance with the severity of the student's actions.**

**Interference with Operation of School Bus Penalty
37-41-2**

(a) It shall be unlawful for any individual, other than a student scheduled to be a passenger upon that particular bus, a member of the public school administration or faculty, or a law enforcement official, to directly interfere in any way with passenger ingress and egress or the operation, including unauthorized boarding thereof, of a bus used in public school student transportation unless permission has been obtained as prescribed by pertinent rules and regulations promulgated by the state board of education or the local school authorities.

(b) Upon conviction of violation of any provision of this section, such individual shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be subject to a fine of not to exceed five hundred (\$500.00) dollars, imprisonment in the county jail for a period not to exceed six (6) months, or both. Any person under the age of seventeen (17) who violates any provision of this section shall be treated as delinquent within the jurisdiction of the youth court.

Student Drug Testing

STUDENT DRUG TESTING PROGRAM-EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The Amite County Board of Education in an effort to protect the health and safety of its students from illegal and/or performance-enhancing drug use and abuse, hereby setting an example of all other students of this school district, has adopted the following policy for drug testing of students participating in extracurricular activities.

PURPOSE AND INTENT

Participation in school-sponsored extracurricular activities such as interscholastic athletics is a privilege. Illegal drug use of any kind is incompatible with participation in any extracurricular activities on behalf of the school district. Students who participate in extracurricular activities are respected by the student body and are expected to hold themselves as good examples of conduct, sportsmanship, and training. Accordingly, students in extracurricular activities carry a responsibility to themselves, their fellow students, their parents, and their school to set the highest possible example of conduct, which includes avoiding the

use or possession of illegal drugs. This policy is intended to complement all other policies, rules, and regulations of the Amite County School District regarding possession or use of illegal drugs.

This policy has been adopted to promote the safety, health and well-being of the students of the district. This policy is not intended to be disciplinary or punitive in nature. The sanctions of this policy relate solely to limiting the opportunity of any student found to be in violation of the policy to participate in any extracurricular activities. There will be no academic sanction for violation of this policy. This policy shall apply to all participant students in grades 7-12.

DEFINITIONS

1. Student athlete: a member of the middle school or high school district-sponsored interscholastic sports team. This includes athletes and cheerleaders.
2. Middle School: middle school comprised of grades 7 and 8.
3. Extracurricular activity: those activities that take place outside the regular course of study in school. Participants are those students involved in said activities.
4. Drug use test: a scientifically substantiated method to test for the presence of illegal or performance-enhancing drug or metabolites in a person's urine.
5. Random tests: a neutral selection basis of testing for drugs and/or alcohol which provides a mechanism for selecting students for testing
6. Random selection basis: a mechanism for selecting students for drug testing that:
 - a) Results in an equal probability that any student from a group of students (pool) subject to the selection mechanism will be selected, and
 - b) Does not give the school district discretion to waive the selection of any student athlete or extracurricular activities participant selected under the mechanism.
7. Follow-up test: random selection of student who tested positive in previous testing procedures.
8. Illegal drugs: any substance which an individual may not sell, possess, use, distribute, or purchase under either federal or state law. Illegal drugs include, but are not limited to, all controlled drugs
9. as defined by federal and state law, all prescription drugs obtained without authorization, and all prescription and over-the-counter drugs being used for an abusive purpose.
10. Performance-enhancing drugs: include anabolic steroids and any other natural or synthetic substance use to increase muscle mass, strength, endurance, speed, or other athletic ability. The term "performance-enhancing drugs" does not include dietary or nutritional supplements such as vitamins, minerals, and proteins which can be lawfully purchased in over-the-counter transactions.
11. Positive: when referring to a drug use test administered under this policy, means a toxicological test result which is considered to demonstrate the presence of an illegal or performance-enhancing drug or the metabolites thereof using the standards customarily established by the testing laboratory administering the drug use test.
12. Reasonable suspicion: a suspicion based on specific personal observations concerning the appearance, speech, or behavior of a student athlete or extracurricular participant, and reasonable inferences based on experience drawn from those observations. Information provided by a reliable source, if based on personal knowledge, shall constitute reasonable suspicion.
13. In the context of performance-enhancing drugs, reasonable suspicion specifically includes unusual increases in size, strength, weight, or other athletic abilities.

The following observation indicators constitute the primary factors for reasonable suspicion testing for drugs and alcohol:

- a) Direct observation by a faculty/staff member of drug and/or alcohol use
- b) Abnormal or erratic behavior indicating intoxication at school, practice Sessions, or at an event function or contest
- c) Physical symptoms indicating intoxication including but not limited to glassy or bloodshot eyes, slurred speech, loss of balance, poor coordination or reflexes
- d) First-hand information provided by reliable and credible (preferably adult) sources of use or intoxication while at school, practice, or at an event function or contest, or
- e) The presence of the drug on the activity student, detectable by the senses, such as the smell of activated marijuana or alcohol
- f) Possession of illegal drugs, RX drugs for which the student does not have a prescription, alcohol containers or drug paraphernalia.

The following observation indicators constitute the primary factors for reasonable suspicion testing for anabolic steroids:

- b) Jaundice due to liver dysfunction
- c) Virilization in females (increased body hair, deepening of the voice)
- d) Breast enlargement in males
- e) Insomnia, or
- f) Depression

14. Self-referral: when a participant who believes she/he will test positive for illegal or performance-enhancing drugs, prior to submission for a drug use test under this policy, so notifies the principal, athletic director, coach, or sponsor of such belief.

PROCEDURES

1. Physical Examination: A physical examination form signed by a parent/guardian is required before a student may participate on a school district athletic team. A urine screen to detect the presence of illegal or performance-enhancing drugs which could have a harmful effect on the prospective athlete's health and athletic performance will be included as part of that physical examination.
2. Consent Form: Student participants in extracurricular activities shall be provided with a copy of this policy and an "extracurricular activities student drug testing program consent form". The consent form shall provide a urine sample to be tested for illegal or performance-enhancing drugs:
 - a) at the beginning of each school year or when the student enrolls in an extracurricular activity; and
 - b) as chosen by the random selection basis; and
 - c) at any time requested based on reasonable suspicion.

The consent form must be read, signed, and dated by the student and parent or custodial guardian before a participant student shall be eligible to participate in any extracurricular activity.

No student shall be allowed to practice or participate in any extracurricular activity unless the student has returned the properly signed consent form.

3. Urine Sample. All extracurricular activities participants shall be required to provide a urine sample for drug use testing for illegal drugs and/or performance-enhancing drugs. Extracurricular

participants who move into the district after the school year begins will be required to have a drug use test before being eligible for participation.

4. **Random Selection.** Drug use testing for extra-curricular participants will also be chosen on a random selection basis from a list of all extracurricular participants in off-season or in-season activities. The school district will determine the number of students' names to be drawn at random to provide a urine sample for drug use testing for illegal or performance-enhancing drugs. The random testing shall be initiated without prior notice.

In addition, any extracurricular participant may be required to submit to a drug use test for illegal drugs or performance-enhancing drugs or the metabolites thereof at any time upon reasonable suspicion by the athletic director, principal, sponsor, or coach of the student. Any reports of reasonable suspicion of student drug use shall be reported to the school principal for immediate investigation. The staff member and the principal must agree that the observable indicators constitute reasonable suspicion of possible drug use before the student can be tested under these provisions.

Once an administrator finds reasonable suspicion, he/she shall contact the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). If the District decides to require submission to such a test, the student will be immediately removed from school for a drug/alcohol test to be conducted within a five (5) hour period of time.

If a student appears incoherent, semi-conscious, unconscious, or convulsive, or appears to be hallucinating, is in respiratory distress or anaphylactic shock, or is in other mental or physical distress indicating danger or injury to the health and safety of the student, District personnel shall seek immediate medical attention before any other actions under this policy are taken. The health of the student shall be given priority.

5. **Fees:** The school district will determine the necessary fees to collect from students who are tested for drug use and when those fees are to be collected. The cost of subsequent tests will be borne by the school district or appropriate activity fund. The cost per test is subject to change and will be determined on an annual basis by the school board.
6. **Drug Use Testing:** Any drug use test required by the school district under this policy will be administered by or at the direction of a professional laboratory chosen by the school district that uses scientifically validated toxicological methods. The professional laboratory shall be required to have detailed, written specifications to assure chain of custody of the specimens, proper laboratory control, and scientific testing.
7. **Testing Monitoring:** All aspects of the drug use testing program, including the taking of specimens, will be conducted to safeguard the personal and privacy rights of students to the maximum degree possible. The test specimen shall be obtained in a manner designed to minimize intrusiveness of the procedure. In particular, the specimen must be collected in a restroom or other private facility with an enclosed stall. The athletic director, activity sponsor, or other school personnel designated by the principal shall accompany student to a restroom or other private facility for the collection of the specimen. The person serving as the monitor must be of the same gender as the student.

If at any time during the testing procedure the monitor has reason to believe or suspect that a student is tampering with the specimen, the monitor may stop the procedure and inform the principal, athletic director, or activity sponsor who will then determine if a new sample should be obtained.

The monitor shall give each student a form on which to list any medications she/he has taken or is taking or any other legitimate reasons for having been in contact with illegal drugs or performance-enhancing drugs in the preceding thirty (30) days. The parent or legal guardian shall

be able to confirm the medication list submitted by their child during the 24 hours following any drug use test. The medication list shall be submitted to the lab in a sealed confidential envelope.

8. Test Results: If the initial drug use test is positive, the initial test result will be subject to confirmation by a second and different test of the same specimen. The second test will use the gas chromatography/mass spectrometry technique. A specimen shall not be reported positive unless the second test utilizing the chromatography/mass spectrometry procedure is positive for the presence of illegal drug or the metabolites thereof. The unused portion of a specimen that tested positive shall be preserved by the laboratory for a period of six (6) months or to the end of the school year, whichever occurs first. Student records will be retained for five (5) years.

CONFIDENTIALITY

If the drug use test for any student has a positive result, the laboratory will contact the athletic director with the results. Procedures for maintaining confidentiality will be practiced. The athletic director will contact the principal, the student, the head coach/sponsor, and the parent or custodial guardian of the student and schedule a conference. At the conference, the student will be given the opportunity to submit additional information to the principal, athletic director, or sponsor or to the lab. The school district will rely on the opinion of the laboratory which performed the drug use test in determining whether the positive test result was produced by other than consumption of an illegal drug or performance-enhancing drug. Under no circumstances will results from a drug use test under this policy be turned over to any law enforcement officer or agency except by court order or subpoena.

APPEAL

A student who has been determined by the athletic director or designee to be in violation of this policy shall have the right to appeal the decision to the superintendent or designee. Such appeal must be filed within five (5) business days of notice of the initial report of the offense as stated in this policy, during which time the student will not be eligible to participate in any extracurricular activities. If the student receives an unfavorable decision from the appeal to the superintendent, he/she has the right to appeal the decision to the Amite County Board of Education within five (5) business days. Although the appeal process is informal, the student shall have the right to have an attorney or other person present, at the student's own expense, and the right to question witnesses. The decision of the School Board shall be final.

CONSEQUENCES

1. First positive test: The student will be suspended from participation in all extracurricular activities for two weeks. The student and parent/guardian must attend counseling two times during the suspension period and one follow-up session. Counseling will consist of a session with the counselor of the school in the district that the student attends and a session with a counseling service recommended by the school. Follow-up sessions may be with one or both counselors. Costs of out-of-school counseling sessions will be the responsibility of the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s).
2. Second positive test: The student will be suspended from participation in any extracurricular activity for the remainder of the semester.
3. Third positive test: The student will be suspended from participation in any extracurricular activities for 180 days.
4. Self-referral: A student who self-refers to the athletic director, principal, coach or sponsor before being notified to submit a drug use test will be allowed to remain active in all extracurricular activities. However, the student will be considered to have committed his/her first offense under this policy, and will be required to retest as would a student who had tested positive.

5. Refusal to submit a drug use test: If a participant student refuses to submit to a drug use test under this policy, such student shall not be eligible to participate in any extracurricular activity, including all meetings, practices, performances, and competitions for 180 school days, upon completion of which, the participating student shall again be subject to this policy.

LEGAL REF: *Board of Education of Independent School District No. 92 of Pottawatomie County v. Earls (2002)*

CROSS REF: Policies ABB-Board Powers and Duties
IDF-Interscholastic Athletics
JCDAC-Drugs and Alcohol
JH/IDE-Student Activities

STUDENT DRUG TESTING PROGRAM FOR SUSPICION-BASED DRUG AND ALCOHOL

The Amite County Board of Education in an effort to protect the health and safety of its students from illegal drug use and abuse has adopted the following policy and procedures for drug testing of students based on suspicion of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

All students are prohibited from carrying, possessing in any manner, or attempting to possess, using, or selling alcoholic beverages, morphine, marijuana, cocaine, opium, heroin, their derivatives or compounds, drugs commonly called LSD, “pep” pills, tranquilizers, or any other narcotic drugs, barbiturate, substance, ingredient, or compound that, when taken orally, intravenously, inhaled, or consumed in any other manner, may cause the person to be under the influence thereof, or any other controlled substance regulated by law, including any substance that is falsely represented to be a controlled or counterfeit substance.

No student shall act in, aid, abet, assist, distribute, or conceal the possession and/or the consumption, purchase, or the distribution of any illegal drugs or alcoholic beverages by another student or students.

PROVISIONS

The provisions of this policy shall not apply to any student who is under the care of a licensed physician and who is taking medication under the supervision and direction of such physician unless the student is illegally selling or distributing medications. With regard to prescription medications, refer to the Amite County School District medication policy.

The provisions of this policy shall apply to all students during the period of time that they are under and/or subject to the jurisdiction of the Amite County School District, while participating in or going to or from any school-related activity, at any place where an athletic contest or event is taking place, during the course of any field trip, during the course of any trip or activity sponsored by the District, while under the supervision and direction of any teacher, principal or other authority of the District, or when such conduct does or may threaten to interfere with or disrupt the educational process or pose a threat to the safety of the student or others.

REASONABLE SUSPICION TESTING

Subject to the limitations contained in this policy, the District may require any student to submit to a drug and/or alcohol test at the expense of the District if there is reasonable suspicion that the student has or is using prohibited drugs and/or alcohol. Reasonable suspicion must be based on specific contemporaneous physical, behavioral, or performance indicators of probable drug and/or alcohol use. The requirement of a drug and/or alcohol test is within the discretion of the District and is not a prerequisite to the administration of punishment under this policy.

The following circumstances shall constitute grounds for reasonable suspicion:

- a) Direct observation and/or confirmation by a District employee of drug and/or alcohol use or possession;
- b) Abnormal or erratic behavior indicating intoxication;

- c) Physical symptoms indicating intoxication including, but not limited to, glassy or bloodshot eyes, slurred speech, loss of balance, poor coordination or reflexes;
- d) First-hand information provided by reliable and credible sources of use, possession, or intoxication;
- e) The presence of a drug or alcohol on the student, detectable by the senses, such as the smell of marijuana or alcohol; or
- f) Possession of illegal drugs, prescription drugs for which the student does not have a prescription, alcohol containers, or drug paraphernalia.

Intoxication means being excited, stupefied, or affected by alcohol or a drug to the point where physical and mental control is diminished.

A report from any source indicating reasonable suspicion that a student may be in violation of this policy should be immediately given to a member of the administrative staff. The administrative staff member must determine that the circumstances constitute reasonable suspicion of drug and/or alcohol use before a student can be requested to take a drug or alcohol test. The administrative staff member is required to write in reasonable detail the facts, symptoms, or observations that form the basis of reasonable suspicion.

Once an administrator finds reasonable suspicion, an administrator shall contact the student's parent/guardian. If the District decides to require submissions to such a test, the student will be immediately removed from school for a drug/alcohol test to be conducted within a five (5) hour period of time.

If a student appears incoherent, semi-conscious, unconscious, or convulsive, or appears to be hallucinating, is in respiratory distress or anaphylactic shock, or is in other mental or physical distress indicating danger or injury to the health and safety of the student, District personnel shall seek immediate medical attention before any other actions under this policy are taken. The health of the student shall be given priority.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING

Any student required to be tested under this policy will be accompanied by a District employee and a parent/guardian to a professional .

All breath, urine, and blood specimens will be collected under reasonable and sanitary conditions. Individual dignity and privacy will be preserved to the extent practicable. Accepted standards for testing, labeling, storage, and transportation of specimens will be followed by the testing laboratory, which will request information regarding prescription and non-prescription drugs and any other information that could lead to a false positive test.

A refusal or failure to take a drug and alcohol test under the conditions of reasonable suspicion shall be considered a positive drug and alcohol test result or offense.

A student or parent/guardian may request a retest at his/her own expense, but the results will only be considered if scientifically meaningful, timely performed, and in compliance with the professional testing laboratory's guidelines. All positive confirmed test results will be made part of a student's record, but they shall be kept confidential and separated in a secured location with restricted access. All positive initial test results for which the confirmation test is negative or which are determined to be false positive shall not become any part of the student's record or discipline record.

The District shall keep the following records for the periods specified as a part of its drug and alcohol policy:

1. Records of drug and/or alcohol test results that show a student failed both an initial and a confirmation drug/alcohol test (a positive drug test) and the reasonable suspicious findings for the tests must be kept for five years.
2. Records of drug and/or alcohol results that show that the student passed an initial or confirmation test (a negative drug test) must be kept for at least one year but shall not be part of the student's record.
3. The District may retain such records for statistical analysis and policy evaluations, as it deems appropriate, consistent with confidentiality.

FINDING OF DRUG AND/OR ALCOHOL USE/POSSESSION CONSEQUENCES

Before the implementation of this policy, and at least annually thereafter, the District shall give training to principals and administrators in drug and alcohol use/abuse recognition and in the implementation of this policy. Principals and administrators will give professional development to employees of all schools in recognition of drug and alcohol use and abuse, handling procedures, and policy implementation familiarization.

If the initial test for drugs and/or alcohol indicates a positive result, the testing laboratory must immediately conduct a confirmation test. If the confirmation test also indicates a positive result, the testing laboratory must report the positive test results to the school principal and the Superintendent or his designee. The school principal will notify the student and parent/guardian in writing of such positive test results and of the consequences of such a report. If the initial test is negative, no further tests will occur unless there is a good reason to suspect the quality of the sample.

If the confirmation test indicates a positive result, then the administrator shall initiate and pursue disciplinary proceedings up to and including referral to the Alternative Program, whether or not the incident for which the testing occurs involves possession, distribution or sale of drugs or alcohol. The administrator may consider any prior drug and alcohol related incidents when considering the consequences of any positive drug test. Amite County School District may recommend counseling and drug education, at the student's expense. **Students who are suspended or expelled due to a drug-related infraction must pass a drug screening before being allowed to return to school.**

The use of discipline, counseling, and education shall be administered in a fair and consistent manner, but it shall be tailored on a case-by-case basis specifically as to what will be most effective for the student involved and what is in the best interests of the educational environment and good order, safety and discipline.

Additional discipline may be imposed on a drug or alcohol offender who commits other disciplinary violations in conjunction with the drug or alcohol incident. The degree of the discipline imposed shall be based on the severity of the discipline infraction committed by the student in conjunction with the drug and alcohol incident up to suspension and recommendation to the school board for expulsion.

A student's refusal or failure to take a drug and alcohol test under the conditions of reasonable suspicion shall be considered a proper drug and alcohol related offense.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The results of a student's drug test shall not be released to anyone other than the testing laboratory, the Superintendent and his designee, principal, and other employees or agents of the District who have a need to know such information. Any discipline resulting from the drug test results shall be recorded in the student's discipline record in accordance with the discipline policies and other policies of the District. In order to maintain confidentiality, written records of drug testing will be stored in a secure location with restricted access.

The District will cooperate with law enforcement, but the test results will not be released to law enforcement agencies without a court order or subpoena unless law requires disclosure. Nothing in this policy will prohibit or restrict District officials from making any report required by law to law enforcement agencies or other agencies.

APPEAL

A student who has been determined to be in violation of this policy shall have the right to appeal the decision to the superintendent or designee. Such appeal must be filed within five (5) business days of notice of the initial report of the offense as stated in this policy. If the student receives an unfavorable decision from the appeal to the superintendent, he/she has the right to appeal the decision to the Amite County Board of Education within five (5) business days. Although the appeal process is informal, the student shall have the right to have an attorney or other person present, at the student's own expense, and the right to question witnesses. The decision of the School Board shall be final.

NOTICE

Before implementation of this policy, reasonable notice of the policy will be made to all students and parents and/or guardians of students.

This policy is for the discipline and protection of the students of the District and their general welfare. Nothing herein contained shall be construed to avoid any prosecution under any pertinent criminal statute of the State of Mississippi.

This policy shall supersede and take precedence over any other policy or practice that is inconsistent herewith.

LEGAL REFERENCE: *MS CODE 37-11-18*

CROSS REFERENCE: Policies- ABB-Board Powers and Duties
JCDAC-Drugs and Alcohol

AMITE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT HANDBOOK
Parent/Legal Guardian
Signature Sheet

Student Name (Print Name)

Each signature does not verify agreement with all the policies and procedures stated in this handbook. Signatures indicate that the persons whose signatures appear on this page have read this handbook and understand the content.

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian

Date

Student's Signature

Date

Student Handbook # _____

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