

# Wilkinson County School District

## Employee Handbook 2018-2019

Ensuring a bright future for every child!



The purpose of this handbook is to make district policy easily accessible to the employees of Wilkinson County School District. This handbook does not contain all the district policies; however, you may find a copy of the District Policy Handbook in your school library or principal's office.

**Kimberly M. Jackson, Superintendent**

Wilkinson County School District  
488 Main Street-Post Office Box 785  
Woodville, Mississippi 39669

Revised 2017-2018 School Year

**WILKINSON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

## SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

### Faculty and Staff,

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to another great year with the Wilkinson County School District, which is one of the fastest growing and successful school districts in the state of Mississippi. We feel strongly that the major reason for our success is the hard work and efforts of our many employees. No matter what your specific job is, it takes **everybody** to make a team. Every one of our 300+ employees is important to us and to the success of our students and we appreciate your efforts.

As the field of education has changed over the last decade and as we try to stay up with those changes, we are also making a great effort to make changes to better support and inform our employees. This updated handbook is one of those efforts and we hope it will help you understand the roles and requirements of being an employee of the Wilkinson County School District. It will hopefully provide you valuable information, notification of laws, regulations, and policies that effect your employment.

While much effort has been placed into revising this handbook, it will certainly not over all of your questions or address every situation that you may encounter as a n employee. We encourage you to contact your direct supervisor with any questions that are not made clear in this handbook and I am sure they will be able to help you find the answer that you need. In addition to this handbook, you can also find more detail information regarding the policies and procedures of our school district in the Wilkinson County Board Policy Manual, which may be found online at <http://www.wilkinson.k12.ms.us>. Should any provision of this handbook conflict with board policy, and/or with state or federal law or regulation the relevant policy, law or regulation will govern. Questions regarding the information in this handbook should be directed to the Director of Human Resources by calling 601-888-3582. Thank you for taking time to review this information and for what you do to enrich the lives of the students of this great county.

Sincerely

Kimberly M. Jackson  
Superintendent of Education

**THE WILKINSON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, GENETIC INFORMATION, GENDER OR DISABILITY.**

# Wilkinson County School Districts'

## Personnel & Positions

Superintendent of Education	Kimberly Jackson	(601) 888-6085
School Board President	Linda Boyd	(601) 888-6860
School Board Vice President	Johnny Smallwood	(601) 888-6433
School Board Member	Fredrick Anderson	(601)
School Board Secretary	Billy Spiller	(601) 888-3608
School Board Member	Fannie Bateaste	(601) 645-5102
School Board Attorney	Nathaniel Armistad	(601)
Federal Programs Director	Chavis L. Bradford	(601) 888-3320
Federal Programs Assistant/Homeless Liaison	Sarah Stanwood	(601) 888-3320
Title I Resource Clerk	Cynthia James	(601) 888-4734
Literacy K-5/ Professional Development	Vanessa Lawrence	(601) 888-4728
Special Services Secretary	Sakina Smith	(601) 888-3706
Special Services Supervisor	Lee Dixon	(601) 888-3582 ext. 228
Special Services Case Manager		(601) 888-3582 ext. 224
Business Manager	Meagan Tolliver	(601) 888-6468
Superintendent's Secretary/Purchasing Clerk	Dorothy S. McCoy	(601) 888-3260
Payroll & Human Resource	Angela Perry	(601) 888-3582 ext. 225
Accounts Payable Clerk	Sharon Tolliver	(601) 888-3582 ext. 223
Food Services Supervisor	Ingrid James	(601) 888-3483
Food Services Secretary	Catrice Jones	(601) 888-3483
Maintenance Director	Eric Gaines	(601) 888-0871
Maintenance Worker	Huey Chapman	(601) 888-3358
Transportation Director	Kevin Groom	(601) 888-5009
Head Mechanic	Jeffrey Knight	(601) 888-3358

<b>Finch Elementary</b>		
Principal	Sharon Robinson	(601) 645-5081
Lead Teacher	Keesha Vaughn	(601) 645-5081
Secretary	Latoya Monroe	(601) 645-5081
<b>Wilkinson County Elementary</b>		
Principal	Regina McCoy	(601) 888-4332
Lead Teacher	Marino McDaniel	(601) 888-4331
Secretary	Juanita Longs	(601) 888-4331
<b>William Winans Middle School</b>		
Principal	Shante Timmons	(601) 645-0008
Lead Teacher	James Coney	(601) 645-0008
Secretary	LaToya McPipe	(601) 645-0008
<b>Martin Luther King Career &amp; Technology Complex</b>		
Director	Jason Hamilton	(601) 888-4394
Secretary	Linda Carter	(601) 888-4394
<b>Wilkinson County High School</b>		
Principal	Derek Morgan	(601) 888-4228
Assistant Principal	Mary Sago-Scott	(601) 888-4228
Secretary	Dorothy Ford	(601) 888-4228
Secretary	Anna Montgomery	(601) 888-4228

## **VISION STATEMENT**

The vision of the Wilkinson County School District is to develop students who demonstrate academic, physical and social growth in a culturally diverse learning environment.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Wilkinson County School District is dedicated to educating and ensuring that each student is learning and develops the assertiveness, skills and knowledge to take full advantage of their potential as positive, productive, and responsible participants in today's diverse society and the global community.

## **DISTRICT GOALS**

- ✓ Increase State Accountability Ratings for Districts and School
- ✓ Create and maintain a safe and orderly school environment that is conducive to learning
- ✓ The district will develop strategies to ensure a stable and high quality staff that encourages interest in the district
- ✓ Ensure that all students receive a constructive educational experience
- ✓ Maintain financial stability
- ✓ Increase student and teacher attendance
- ✓ Decrease student discipline referrals
- ✓ Enhance learning, communication, and organization through the use of technology

## **VALUES**

Excellence; Commitment to Children; Accountability; Integrity; Honesty; Responsibility; No Political Agenda

## **STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

Student Achievement; Learning in a Safe Environment; Effective and Efficient Use of Resources



**POLICY AND GOVERNANCE:**

Conduct a review and revise the Student and Employee Handbook and inform all involved parties of the transitions. Ensure that school boards policies are more accessible and to establish procedures to change, add, or delete policies.

**TRANSPORTATION**

To transport students and execute transportation operations in a safe, competent, and effect manner.

**CHILD NUTRITION**

To provide students with healthy nutritional choices that are appetizing and meets the nutritional standards that are required by all students.

**ATHLETICS**

To provide an opportunity that allows student-athletes to meet and possibly surpass expectations in all phases of their athletic experience and to deliver the resources for coaches and staff to cultivate successful programs

**Motto**

**“Wilkinson County School District: Join the Wildcat Movement.”**

## **SUPERINTENDENT’S DISTRICT GOALS**

It is the purpose of the Wilkinson County School District to make better and more capable citizens of each student who attend our schools. We seek to find and use every effective means to provide our students with an educational experience that will promote cooperative and successful living in a democratic society, as well as prepare students for the competitive environment of college and the workplace.

Other objectives of our school and district are to promote high standards of conduct among students and teachers, to create and develop an interest in civic affairs, to promote school and community loyalty, to develop pride in and care of public property, and to encourage full and complete utilization of every opportunity for maximum educational growth.

Education is fundamental to the American way of life. “Public education is an investment. Let us keep faith with those who have made such great investments in us by doing our best.”

## School Contact Information

<p style="text-align: center; color: green;"><b>Finch Elementary School</b></p> <p><b>Principal: Ms. Sharon Robinson</b></p> <p><b>P.O. Box 130 / 1125 Cosby St.</b></p> <p><b>Centreville, MS 39631</b></p> <p><b>Phone: (601) 645-5081</b></p> <p><b>Fax: (601) 645-6358</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center; color: green;"><b>Wilkinson County Elementary School</b></p> <p><b>Principal: Mrs. Regina H. McCoy, Phd.</b></p> <p><b>522 Pickneyville Road</b></p> <p><b>Woodville, MS 39669</b></p> <p><b>Phone: (601) 888-4331</b></p> <p><b>Fax: (601) 888-6335</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center; color: green;"><b>Williams Winans Middle School</b></p> <p><b>Principal: Ms. Shante Timmons</b></p> <p><b>P.O. Box 610 / 166 East Cherokee St.</b></p> <p><b>Centreville, MS 39631</b></p> <p><b>Phone: (601) 645-0008</b></p> <p><b>Fax: (601) 645-0170</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center; color: green;"><b>MLK Career &amp; Technology Complex</b></p> <p><b>Director: Mr. Jason Hamilton</b></p> <p><b>P.O. Box 1193 / 1106 Highway 24 East</b></p> <p><b>Woodville, MS 39669</b></p> <p><b>Phone: (601) 888-4394</b></p> <p><b>Fax: (601) 888-4740</b></p>
<p style="color: green;"><b>Wilkinson County High School</b></p> <p><b>Principal: Mr. Derek Morgan, Phd.</b></p> <p><b>522 Pickneyville Road</b></p> <p><b>Woodville, MS 39669</b></p> <p><b>Phone: (601) 888-4228</b></p> <p><b>Fax: (601) 888-4736</b></p>	

## SECTION II: EMPLOYMENT

### **AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)**

The ADA prohibits discrimination against “qualified individuals with disabilities”. A qualified individual with a disability is one who can perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodation. The WCSD will reasonably accommodate qualified applicants and employees with disabilities unless making accommodations places an undue hardship on the District. Employees requiring accommodation should communicate with their immediate supervisor in an attempt to resolve issues relating to disabilities.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

The Superintendent is empowered with the authority to assign and transfer all staff within the District. Staff members with an employment contract are not guaranteed a specific school site, grade level or subject matter assignment, but are deployed based on the staffing requirements of the District’s schools.

### **CHILD ABUSE/CHILD PROTECTION**

The Wilkinson County Board of Education recognizes its legal and ethical obligation in the reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect. Where there is “reasonable cause” to suspect a child has been abused and/or neglected or threatened with abuse as defined in MS Code 43-23-3(h)(i) and 93-21-3(a)(i)(ii)(iii) school personnel, **as mandated reporters**, shall act in accordance with the state laws and report incidents to the Mississippi State Department of Human Services (1-800-222-8000) or its successors, or other such duly constituted authorities. Reports of child abuse or neglect, including the name and address of the child, family mandated reporter, or any other identifying information in the report shall remain confidential and shall not be public information. As provided in MS Code 43-21-355 and 93-21-23, any mandated reporter making a report or participating in judicial proceedings shall be presumed to be acting in good faith, and if found to have acted in good faith shall be immune from liability, civil or criminal, that might be incurred or imposed. The reporting of an abused person shall not constitute a breach of confidentiality.

## **CLASSIFICATION OF EMPLOYEES**

Employees are classified as either certified/licensed or non-certified support staff.

**Certified/licensed staff** members are employees whose duties require a certificate/license issued by the Office of Licensure, Mississippi Department of Education. Pursuant to state law, licensed employees do not acquire tenure.

The board may dismiss any teacher in accordance with state laws, regulations, and current judicial decisions/opinions. Dismissal shall be made for incompetence, neglect of duty, immoral conduct, intemperance, brutal treatment of a pupil, violation of the Mississippi Department of Education Code of Ethics, or other good cause. Insubordination shall constitute other good cause of dismissal. The teacher's statutory due process rights will be honored by the board.

**Non-certified/support staff members** are employees whose duties do not require a certificate/license issued by the Mississippi Department of Education.

Support/classified non-instructional personnel are "at-will" employees whose duties do not require a certificate/license issued by the State Department of Education. **Classified employees have no property rights in their employment and may be terminated without notice at any time by either the employee or the employer.**

**Full-Time Employees** are individuals who are scheduled to work 40 hours per week on a regular basis. In order for a full-time employee to be eligible for insurance benefits, he/she must work a minimum of 20 hours per week.

**Part-Time Employees** are individuals who are scheduled to work less than 20 hours per week on a regular basis. Part-time employees are not eligible for insurance benefits.

**Temporary Employees** are individuals who may temporarily supplement the District's workforce or who may be engaged for specific project work. Temporary employees are not eligible for benefits.

**Exempt Employees** are individuals who are not required to be paid overtime beyond the prescribed 40-hour workweek in accordance with the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division regulations. Exempt employees are also considered to be "salaried" employees and receive standard pay regardless of hours worked within a workday or workweek.

**Non-Exempt Employees** are individuals who are eligible for overtime pay beyond the prescribed 40-hour workweek as regulated by the Wage and Hour Division of the U.S. Department of Labor. In addition, the District's School Resources Officers (Security) may receive overtime consideration in the form of compensatory time.

## **Employees Work Hours**

Certified Employees: 7:45 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Certified Employees Bus Duty: 7:15 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Counselors: 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Classified Employees: 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. or 7:45 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Building Level Administrators: 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. (unless there is an afterschool activity)

Janitorial Staff: 6:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (with a two hour lunch break) or 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (with a one hour lunch break)

### **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

The Wilkinson County School District may require any employee to submit to a thorough physical examination which may be necessary to determine if an infectious or communicable disease exists for the protection and public health of students and staff.

### **COMPLAINT PROCEDURES**

The Wilkinson County School District is committed to resolving complaints, grievances or other forms of conflict through a formal process when appropriate or otherwise required by law or regulations. The following procedure is applicable to all forms of complaints or grievances filed by persons who have been unable to informally resolve employment-related issues, including complaints relating to harassment, discrimination, other work-related situations, or as required by applicable laws or government regulations.

Since it is important that complaints be filed and processed as rapidly as possible, the number of days indicated at each step are considered to be maximum and every effort will be made to expedite the process. At any step in the complaint procedure, the time limits may be extended only when necessary under the circumstances. In no event shall these procedures be extended for more than a 90-day period.

If a review is not requested at any step within the time allotted, and if the decision at the prior step found a reasonable basis to believe that an employee has engaged in any sexual misconduct or involvement with any student under the age of 18, such information will be submitted to the Superintendent, who shall make such information available to the appropriate district attorney as required by district policy and Mississippi law.

A copy of documents, communications and records dealing with the processing of complaints will be filed in a separate file as designated by the Superintendent. Facts elicited during the complaint procedure that result in adverse disciplinary action against an employee become part of that employee's personnel file.

The failure of a complainant to proceed from one step to the next within the set time limits, without being granted an extension of time, shall be deemed to be an acceptance of the decision previously rendered and shall eliminate any future review concerning that particular complaint.

The failure of the reviewing officer(s) to communicate his/.her decision to the complainant or respondent within the prescribed time limits shall permit the complainant or respondent to proceed to the next step.

The complainant may withdraw his/her complaint at any step without reprisal. However, a complainant shall not be permitted to re-file the same complaint once withdrawn unless it is within the initial time period. No reprisal shall be invoked against complainant for filing a complaint or against any person for participation in any way in this procedure.

All employees are expected to cooperate fully with any internal investigation. Providing false information is a violation of the Code of Conduct and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Complainants should observe the following steps when formally pursuing a complaint or grievance.

**STEP I:** Within five school days of when a complainant knew or should have known of a complaint or grievance, a complaint shall be made in writing to the complainant's immediate supervisor. Alternatively, should the immediate supervisor be accused of offending actions which have prompted a complaint, the written complaint may be filed with the Director of Human Resources or designee.

The written complaint shall describe specifically the time, place and nature of, and the participants in the alleged discriminatory or offending acts. The immediate supervisor (or Director of Human Resources or designee), shall within five school days of receipt of the complaint, conduct or cause to conduct a thorough investigation including questioning of all parties involved in the complaint and produce a written record of the statements involved. After the investigation is complete, the immediate supervisor (or Director of Human Resources or designee) shall meet with the complaining party and present a report of the findings of the investigation.

**STEP II:** If the complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant with the report produced from the findings of Step I of this procedure, the complainant shall have five school days to appeal the Step I findings to the Superintendent or designee. The complainant shall present the original complaint in writing and accompanying reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcome of the Step I findings. The Superintendent or designee shall review all aspects of the complaint, conduct additional investigation if necessary and respond to the complainant in writing within five school days of the written appeal.

**STEP III:** If the complainant is not satisfied with the results of Step II of this procedure, the complainant shall have five school days from receipt of the Step II decision to appeal the complaint to the Board of Education of the Wilkinson School District. The appeal shall be filed in writing, including a description of the original complainant's reasons for dissatisfaction with the results of outcomes of Steps I and II of this procedure.

The complainant shall have the opportunity to present an oral statement to the Wilkinson County School District Board of Education at a regularly scheduled meeting before a final decision is rendered. The Board's decision shall be provided to the complainant within five school days after reviewing the Step II appeal of this procedure and shall be final and binding.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

It is imperative that all matters related to the WSCD, its students, parents and employee is to sign a statement of confidentiality annually.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Employees of the Wilkinson County School District shall not have a financial interest, directly or indirectly, in any activity that conflicts or raises a reasonable question of conflict with duties and responsibilities of employment within the District. No staff member shall engage in any type of private business during school time and on school property.

Employees shall not engage in work of any type where the source of information covering customer, client, or employer originates from any information obtained through the school district. No gifts from any person or group desiring or doing business with the District shall be solicited by a school employee without administrative authorization and approval.

Employees of WSCD may not sell products or engage in any fund raising activities without authorization. This restriction applies to both certified and non-certified staff.

## **DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY**

It is the District's intent to maintain a drug-free working environment for all employees and students. Whenever use or abuse of illegal or controlled substances interferes with the workplace, appropriate action may be taken, including testing or discipline up to and including termination when warranted. Full cooperation will be extended with law enforcement in pursuit of any drug-related violations occurring in the working environment.

Wilkinson County School District has established a school board policy summarized as follows: It is a violation for any employee of the Wilkinson County School District to manufacture, possess, distribute, dispense or use unlawfully on or in the workplace, alcohol or any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, or any other controlled substance as define by law. The "workplace" is defined as a school building or other school district premises; when using any school-owned vehicle; off-school property during and sponsored or school-approved activity, event or function such as a field trip or athletic event.

Employees are required to abide by board policy in respecting a drug-free workplace. Employees must notify their supervisor of any conviction involving a controlled substance, which will precipitate appropriate follow-up action by the District.



The Wilkinson County School District reserves the right to test any employee if there is reasonable suspicion of use of illegal drugs or alcohol. In addition, the District also reserves the right to conduct pre-employment and random testing of bus drivers as well as all other District personnel. Reasonable suspicion testing may be based upon the following;

- Observable phenomena, such as direct observation of drug use and/or the physical manifestations of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol;
- Abnormal conduct or erratic behavior while at work, questionable attendance patterns or deterioration of work performance;
- A report of drug use provided by reliable and credible sources to include independent corroboration;
- Evidence of tampering with a drug/alcohol test;
- Information that an employee is involved in the use, possession, sale, solicitation or transfer of drugs while working or while school premises or while operating a school district vehicle, machinery or equipment.

Any employee who refuses to take a drug or alcohol test will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment. Additional regulations relating to the District's policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace may be found in school board policy.

## **EDUCATION EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURES LAW OF 2001 (Non-Reemployment of Teacher)**

An act to provide a mechanism for the non-renewal of licensed school employees in a timely, cost-efficient and fair manner; to provide uniform standards for employment practices; to correct deficiencies in current statutory provisions relating to non-reemployment of licensed employees; to amend section 37-9-101, MS Code of 1972, to provide that all decisions of non-reemployment of school employees must be based on valid educational reasons with respect to employment or non-compliance with school district personnel policies; to amend section 37-8-103, MS Code of 1972, to provide that the school employment procedures law shall apply to all licensed personnel employed by a school district; to create new section 37-9-104, MS Code of 1972, to require notice of a preliminary determination by a school board not to renew a superintendent's contract to be provided by February 1; to amend section 37-9-105, MS Code of 1972, to require the written notice of a licensed employee's proposed non-reemployment to state the specific reasons for non-reemployment and include a list of witnesses and evidence; to amend section 37-9-109, MS Code of 1972, to prescribe the rights and duties of employees at hearings; to amend section 37-9-111, MS Code of 1972, to establish requirements for hearing officers at hearings on the non-reemployment of licensed employees, to require hearings to be held in executive session unless an employee elects for a public hearing, to provide for the presentation of evidence at the hearing and to prescribe the burden of proof at the hearing for upholding the decision on non-reemployment; and for related purposes. Be it enacted by the legislature of the State of Mississippi.

## **EMPLOYEE CONTACT INFORMATION**

Each staff member must have on file with the building principal/immediate supervisor and the Human Resources Office, his/her current home telephone number, an emergency telephone number, and current home address. Any change must be reported immediately.

All notices required by statute, regulation or policy will be sent to the address on file in the Human Resources office.

## **EMPLOYMENT AT WILL**

Staff members employed with the Wilkinson County School District without a contract of employment are considered; "At will" employees. This means that either the District or the employee can terminate employment at any time, for any reason, except prohibited by law. Progressive discipline does not alter the At Will status nor are At Will employees entitled to a hearing as may be afforded by law to contracted employees. No one has the authority to make promises made by anyone in a management or supervisory position be interpreted as an employment guarantee. By law, certain positions such as teachers and other certified staff are provided with an employment contract and are expected to fully abide by the terms of their contract.

## **EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS**

All staff members employed by the District under a formal contract of employment (certified staff) are required to furnish all information required by the state of Mississippi and the Wilkinson County School District. Employment contracts must conform to the State Board of Education guidelines including the name of the school district. Length of the contract period, scholastic school year dates, total amount of annual salary and how the salary is payable, following approval by the local school board.

Any District employment under contract to teach or perform other duties within the District who desires to be released from contractual obligations of the District must apply in writing for release stating reasons for such a release.

Any District employment contract arbitrarily or willfully breached without having been provided an approved release will be declared null and void. Any employee absent from his/her employment without informing his/her immediate supervisor after two consecutive days of unauthorized absence will be deemed to have abandoned the position which may constitute grounds for breach of contract that may result in termination of employment. Consideration may be given to special circumstances preventing an employee from reporting to work.

## **EMPLOYMENT TRANSFERS**

WCSD will provide lists of open positions for current employees who wish to transfer. These openings will be posted on the District website as well as distributed to the school principals for display in employee areas. Any current employee who wishes to request a transfer must send a letter of interest for the specific position in which he/she would like to transfer. Include a resume and, if applicable, a copy of a current teaching certificate. This information may be sent confidentially by regular mail or email to [kjackson@wilkinson.k12.ms.us](mailto:kjackson@wilkinson.k12.ms.us). Interviews for these transfers will be scheduled by the hiring manager/principal. Transfer packets for transfer will not be considered if the information is not complete or is submitted after the deadline (closing date).

Once an employee has been approved for transfer, he/she may not request another transfer in that same school year, unless a different position becomes available. For example, a custodian who requests to transfer to another school as a custodian would not be allowed to make an additional transfer to a different school in the same job during that school year. A classroom teacher who transferred to another school as a classroom teacher could request to transfer to a library position in the same school year, because it is two different positions.

The superintendent or designee shall transfer personnel from one position and/or school to another as needed. In cases where staff members must be transferred involuntarily due to change in the size or nature of the student population, unavoidable budgetary limitations, or other justifiable reasons as determined by the superintendent, the superintendent or designee shall transfer a staff member from one position to another position for which the staff member is qualified through experience and training within the school system. When future vacancies develop for which the affected staff member would be qualified through experience and

training, first consideration will be given to that staff member. If a staff member declines to return to the same position or a comparable position for which he/she would be qualified through experience and training, he/she will no longer receive preferred consideration.

### **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

No person shall be denied employment, re-employment, or advancement on the basis of gender, marital status, race, color, creed, national origin, socioeconomic status, religion, genetic information or disability in accordance with federal and state laws and state accreditation standards. Board policies follow state and federal laws and related regulations and procedures for employment, retention and dismissal of all personnel.

All applications for employment shall be given equal consideration and positions shall be awarded on the basis of needs of the district, qualifications of the applicants and recommendations of those applications at the time a vacancy occurs. Age shall be considered only with respect to the minimums or maximums as set by law. The district will not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities to the extent provided by law.

Employees who wish to file complaints of discrimination related to marital status, race, color, creed, national origin, socioeconomic status, genetic information or religion should refer to the District's Complaint Procedures contained in this employee handbook.

### **EXPECTATION FOR EMPLOYEE CONDUCT**

ALL EMPLOYEES ARE COVERED BY THE MISSISSIPPI EDUCATION CODE OF ETHICS AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AS REVISED JANUARY 20, 2011.

It is essential that emphasis be given to the issue of teacher negligence and legal implications that may arise due to negligence. Failure to adhere to the following examples of prohibited activity may result in disciplinary action. Considering the relevance of teacher negligence to actual legal liability of teachers, the following should be observed as examples of negligence:

1. Classes and students left unattended.
2. Late arrival to work.
3. Failure to attend to duty station.
4. Improper enforcement of policy on corporal punishment (by administrators only).
5. Improper enforcement of policy on medication and first aid.
6. Pupil injury due to teacher carelessness, absence, etc.
7. Teacher profanity.
8. Improper enforcement of dress and grooming policy.
9. Unauthorized invasion of liberty rights.
10. Unauthorized release of students.
11. Use of students for off-campus errands.
12. Improper enforcement of search and seizure.

13. Improper enforcement of policy and pupil use of school building after hours.
14. Improper use of drugs.
15. Unauthorized release of student information.
16. Unauthorized use of tobacco products during on-going school sponsored activities.
17. Improper enforcement of any policy established by Wilkinson County School Board.

## **HARRASSMENT**

WCSD strives to provide a work environment that is free from harassment. Therefore, WCSD will not tolerate harassment based on age, sex, race, gender, color, religion, national origin, disability, marital status, covered veteran status, sexual orientation, status with respect to public assistance and other characteristics protected under state, federal and local law. This conduct is prohibited in any form at the workplace. This policy applies to all employees, clients, customers, guests, vendors and persons doing business with WCSD.

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct toward an individual because of his or her age, sex, race, gender, color, religion or other protected status when the conduct creates what a reasonable person would interpret as an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment that causes work performance to suffer or negativity affects job opportunities.

Types of prohibited harassment include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Verbal or written comments related to a trait someone possesses. This includes, but is not limited to name-calling, jokes, slurs, negative stereotyping or threats.
- Explicit or degrading verbal comments about another individual or his or her appearance or other characteristics.
- Nonverbal conduct, such as staring, leering or giving inappropriate gifts.
- Physical conduct, such as assault or unwanted touching
- Visual images, in hard copy or electronic form, relating to a trait someone possesses (for example, cartoons, drawings or pictures).

Appropriate performance reviews, counseling or discipline by supervisors do not constitute harassment.

If you feel that you are harassed or witness harassment taking place, take the following steps:

- Tell the harasser that his or her actions are not welcome and they must stop.
- Report the incident immediately to your immediate supervisor. In the event your complaint involves the supervisor, then you should report the event immediately to the Human Resources Department.
- Report any additional incidents or retaliation that may occur to your manager and the Human Resources department immediately.

All reports will be investigated immediately and thoroughly. Complaints and actions taken to resolve complaints will be handled as confidentially as possible. Appropriate actions will be

taken to stop and remedy such conduct, including interim measures during a period of investigation.

Retaliating or discriminating against an employee who reports suspected incident of harassment or who cooperates in an investigation is prohibited. Employees who violate this policy or retaliate against an employee in any way will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### **Sexual Harassment**

It is the intent of the school board to maintain an environment free from sexual harassment of any kind. Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted or unwelcomed conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, physical or visual and is without regard to gender. Therefore, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature are strictly prohibited.

Should a formal complaint be filed, the District's complaint procedure contained in this employee handbook shall be observed. Should violations prove to be legitimate, the offering employee shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### **NEPOTISM**

No immediate family members will be assigned to the same school campus resulting in one family member supervising and/or recommending another family member, unless determined otherwise by the School Board.

### **PERSONNEL RECORDS AND FILES**

Employee personnel records shall be considered confidential information and are the property of the Wilkinson County School District, not of individual employees. Employees have the right, upon written request on the appropriate form, to review the non-confidential contents of their personnel files. Confidential records such as application references, promotional references, etc. will not be made available to an employee in compliance with waiver of access to confidential references. The release of any identifiable information from an employee's personnel record shall be in accordance with the provision set forth in PL 93-380---Family Rights and Privacy Act. Confidential employment records are maintained in the Human Resources Department of the District and are not permitted to leave the premises unless subpoenaed or otherwise wise legally required for outside review by a governing authority.

## **POLITICAL ACTIVITY OF STAFF MEMBERS**

District staff members have a right to engage in political activity. However, school property and school time should not be used for political purposes except as provided for in policies pertaining to the use of school buildings by civic and political organizations.

“School time” is defined as the time an employee is required to be on school grounds including the time before school begins, time after is dismissed and any school-sponsored event, including extra-curricular activities.

Any employee who intends to campaign for an elective public office shall notify the school board in writing as soon as possible along with a decision to continue employment in the District, including terms and conditions. The District shall not require an employee seeking public office to resign or take a leave of absence, although political activities of such employees must be compatible with time and other requirements for fulfilling employment responsibilities with the District.

## **PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE**

The WCSD is committed to administering equitable and consistent discipline for misconduct, unsatisfactory job performance or other inappropriate performance or job-related behavior. Progressive discipline may include a verbal warning, written warning, suspension or employment termination based on the nature and severity of an offense. The following steps are included in the progressive disciplinary process, although the nature of the offense will dictate at which point in the progressive discipline process a penalty is imposed.

- **Verbal warning:** Conduct or job performance issues are brought to the attention of the employee orally with suggestions regarding remedying the offense. The employee should be also warned that repeated offenses would result in further disciplinary action, which may be more severe than a verbal warning. Documentation of the meeting must be signed by the employee and the employee’s supervisor.
- **Written disciplinary warning:** Depending on the nature of an offense and usually following a verbal warning, a written warning may be presented to an offending employee with a statement of the nature of the offense, corrective action required and consequences for repeated violations including more severe disciplinary action including suspension or employment termination. Documentation of the meeting must be signed by the employee and the employee’s supervisor.
- **Suspension of Employment:** Usually, but not necessarily following verbal or written warnings, an employee may be suspended with or without pay at the discretion of District management. A written suspension notice will be provided including a statement of the nature of the offense with a warning that further violations will result in employment termination.

- **Termination:** Non-certified staff may have employment terminated for egregious offenses or for repeated violations, which may be preceded, by verbal and written warnings and/or suspension of employment. Certified staff may be terminated in accordance with the Education Employment Procedures Law of 2001.

### **REDUCTION IN FORCE**

The Wilkinson County School Board has the responsibility for providing and maintaining quality schools in the District. In order to carry out its responsibility, the Board may, upon review of contracts, abolish or combine job positions, reduce the salary of employees, and/or reduce the number of employees. When doing so, the Board will take into account the following reasons for reduction in force: enrollment, educational programs, and human, material and financial resources.

The primary object of the Board when reducing the workforce will be the maintenance of a fair and balanced educational program consistent with the needs of the students and the functions and responsibilities of the school district. The board will consider the following factors, not necessarily in the order listed:

1. Importance of the position to the mission, goals and objectives of the school district.
2. Area(s) and level(s) of competence indicated by certification.
3. Experience, professional training and length of service within the District and the work assignment.
4. Quality of performance including character, teaching capacity and/or executive ability.
5. Skills in areas where the District has instructional and/or supervisory needs.

Initially, staff reduction will be accomplished by attrition.

### **STAFF ARREST/INDICTMENT/CONVICTION**

Any employee who is arrested, charged, indicted, or convicted of a felony or misdemeanor is required to notify his/her immediate supervisor and the superintendent or designee as soon as possible but no later than within 24 hours and prior to returning to duty. Failure to report incidents may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. See also Policy ADB, Policy CD, Policy GBN, Policy GBEC and Policy GCQF.



## **SECTION III: COMPENSATION**

### **COMPULSORY DEDUCTIONS:**

Any time your number of exemptions changes, it is necessary that you complete a new tax form and send it to the county office at least 10 days before payroll issue day.

#### **For Changes:**

- W-4 Form---Federal Tax
- Withholding Tax-State

#### **Mandatory Deductions:**

- Social Security
- Medicare
- State Retirement

### **HOURS WORKED-DUTY TIMES**

Each employee subject to FLSA shall be paid In accordance with all hours worked for the district. Compensable time includes all the time that an employee is required to be on duty and working. Breaks, waiting time, and meal periods that are frequently interrupted by calls to duty are hours worked and are compensable. Employees who do not have such times shall times shall not engage in work times included in their total workday shall have such times uninterrupted and shall not engage in work for the district during these periods except for a rare and infrequent emergency. In no case shall a supervisor schedule an employee subject to FLSA to work more than 40 hours per workweek. Supervisors shall establish all duty times, and employees are expected to adhere to those times. Supervisors may only make modifications in duty times. Employees are not allowed to schedule their own overtime. If an employee feels that overtime is needed to complete specific work, then the employee is to seek approval from the supervisor before engaging in the work.

### **MINIMUM WAGE**

All employees subject to the FLSA shall be paid not less than the current minimum wages as issued through the U.S. Department of Labor.

**OVERTIME AND COMPENSATORY TIME----SCHOOL RESOURCE AND SCHOOL OFFICERS ONLY**

Overtime may be paid in the form of compensatory time rather than dollars. If compensatory time is used, the employee will be compensated at the rate of 1.5 of the overtime worked (1 hour of approved overtime = 1.5 hours of compensatory time). The Director of Public Safety is charged with the responsibility of properly documenting the issuance of compensatory time and also for the recording of written evidence that awarded compensatory time has been taken by the employee for overtime work performed.

Compensatory time should not be allowed to accrue. Any compensatory time granted to the employee must be taken the fiscal year it is earned. Deviation from this requirement may only be made by the superintendent or assistant superintendent.

All school Resource and School Safety Officers shall be required to sign a *Statement of Understanding and Agreement* in regard to the district's policy on compensatory time.

**OVERTIME PAYMENTS IN DOLLAR-REGULAR RATE OF PAY**

All overtime pay will be based upon established procedures of the Wage and Hour Division of the U.S. Department of Labor.

**SALARY PAYMENT SCHEDULE: (WCSD POLICY CODE DJCA)**

All employees shall be paid through a single monthly payroll during a school term, regardless of the reason(s) the employment ended, shall be paid salary or wages inly for that portion of the school term that the employee actually worked. Nothing in this section shall be construed to entitle any employee to payment of salary or wages when no work has been performed. MS Code 37-9-39.

All contractual and hourly personnel in the Wilkinson County School District will be paid on the last working day of each month.

The superintendent, principal, licensed or non-instructional employee who completes the entire scholastic year shall be entitled to payment for the full number of monthly payments provided by the contract without regard to his/her activity at the time when his/her services are not required by the school district.

## **SALARY SCALES**

Employees may refer to the Wilkinson County School District Salary Scale through the District's Human Resources Office for current salary information.

Salaries are payable in 12 monthly installments which are issued on the last working day of each calendar month from the county office, (**Exception: December checks are issued on day faculty and students are dismissed for Christmas holidays**).

The salary, sick leave, and personal leave days for all staff members who are employed part-time or less than a full year shall be prorated based on the percentage of time worked during the school year.

In order for licensed employee to receive a full salary adjustment based on a new certificate or new level of certificate, the employee must submit the new certificate/license to the Human Resources office on or before the first day of October for any changes in the salary scale to be effective during the current contractual year. If over 45 days when new Level Certificate is received, the new salary will be calculated according to date of issuance on Certificate, therefore, a contracted salary cannot be changed without certificate.

The Wilkinson County School District Policy adheres to the minimum wage, overtime pay and record keeping requirements and the child labor restrictions in compliance with the standards of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of the United States.

## **WORK TIMES AND OVERTIME COMPENSATION FOR NON-EXEMPT (HOURLY PAID) STAFF**

In order to comply with the regulations issued by the Wage and Hour Division of the Department of Labor and in keeping with the regulations of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), the Wilkinson County School District keeps weekly wage and hour reports on all non-certified personnel, regardless of the hours worked or position held. Contracted employees (administrators, teachers, etc.) are exempt from FLSA requirements regarding payment of overtime, although time and attendance records are kept on file.

## **WORKWEEK**

For employees subject to the FLSA, the workweek begins on Sunday at 12:01 a.m. and ends on the following Saturday at 12:00 midnight.

Employees are expected to begin the workday and end the workday at or about the time specified by the employee's supervisor (established such that no more than 40 hours of work will be expected during the workweek) unless requested to work overtime by the supervisor. Employees must obtain prior approval before requesting or receiving overtime payment.

## **SECTION IV: EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

### **CAFETERIA PLAN**

The WCSD participates in a Section 125 plan, which is regulated by the Internal Revenue Service and is commonly known as a “cafeteria plan”. Participation is optional, but enables employees to reduce income tax liability when paying for covered expenses under IRS regulations.

In conjunction with the cafeteria plan, additional tax favorable benefits to participation include dependent care reimbursement and a medical reimbursement account. Information regarding this benefit may be obtained through the District’s Human Resource Department.

### **COBRA (CONSOLIDATED OMNIBUS RECONCILIATION ACT)**

Upon certain qualifying events that are defined by federal law, employees and/or their spouses and dependent children may continue coverage in the group health insurance plan. Employees who face discontinuation of their group health insurance should contact the Human Resources Department for information concerning eligibility and requirements for coverage.

### **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

What is an Employee Assistance Program? An EAP is referral and counseling service. It is a benefit provided by your employer to help you and your family members resolve job-related, personal and family problems. Your EAP can help you and your eligible family members deal with a variety of situations: stress, marital and family problems, emotional issues, and drug and alcohol abuse. The EAP is located at 239 Methodist Blvd., Hattiesburg, MS 39402. Phone 601-268-5026.

### **MEDICAL INSURANCE**

The WCSD participates in the State of Mississippi health insurance plan for school employees. Information regarding the options available to District employees may be obtained through the Human Resources Department in the central administrative office.

New employees’ coverage become effective on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of employment, provided you complete and submit to District Office an enrollment form, which must be received by BCBS (State Health Plan) within 31 days of your hire date.

If you waive coverage of insurance within 31 days of your hire date, you may apply again, only during open enrollment, (Oct. 1-31), for January 1<sup>st</sup> (eff date). You may also effect to cover eligible dependents, if you enroll yourself when hired or during open enrollment. The full cost of the premium for covering your dependents is your responsibility, and this is payroll deducted.

(NOTE: Employees must work at least 20 hours per week or 80 hours per month to be eligible for health insurance.)

## **RETIREMENT BENEFITS (Public Employees' Retirement System)**

All full-time employees must participate in the state retirement system (PERS) requiring a mandatory salary deduction.

**For additional information regarding benefits, vesting requirements, forms, and related details, log on to the PERS Web Site: <http://www.pers.state.ms.us>**

Employees considering retiring from employment with the Wilkinson County School District should contact the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) for a retirement application and benefit information and immediately notify the District's Human Resources Department of retirement intentions.

PERS recommends consulting with a PERS benefits analyst (see contact information below) well in advance of applying for benefits and recommends beginning the application process at least 90 days prior to receiving benefits.

**Connect with the PERS Web site for an online copy of the PERS' "Retiree Handbook":**

**<http://www.pers.state.ms.us/pdf/memberservices/handbook/Retiree-Handbook.pdf>**

The offices of the state retirement system are located at:

429 Mississippi Street

Jackson, MS 39201-1005

1-800-444-7377; OR 601-359-3589

**NOTE: Employees must work at least 20 hours per week or 80 hours per month to be eligible for participation in the Public Employees Retirement System.)**

## **VOLUNTARY BENEFITS**

Additional voluntary (employee paid) benefits available through payroll deduction and endorsed by the District include supplemental life, cancer, dental, disability, vision, accident, and medical GAP insurance programs. Information on these programs is available through the District's Human Resources Department.

## **SECTION V: PAID LEAVE**

### **ALL EMPLOYEES**

#### **Sick Leave Defined**

Sick leave shall be defines as personal illness of the employee, the employee's spouse or children, the parent(s) of the employee, or the parent(s) of the employee's spouse. Further, sick leave may be used in the event of death in the immediate family to include the above-stated family members or the employee, When using sick leave the employee must call in no later than 1 hour before beginning of school day (30 minutes if already have obtained substitute).

#### **Vacations/Trips**

Vacation/trips of a personal nature shall be considered personal leave and shall be handled as outlined under personal leave guidelines.

#### **Absences for three or More Consecutive Days**

Employees absent from duty for four (4) or more consecutive days may be required to furnish a statement of cause to the district office upon return to duty.

### **ASSISTANT TEACHERS/SUBSTITUTE LEAVE POLICY**

A classroom teacher who has a full-time Assistant Teacher in his/her classroom may use the Assistant Teacher as his/her substitute when absent for no more than three (3) consecutive days.

#### **CALCULATION OF LEAVE DAY**

One (1) day of leave under this policy shall consist of the actual working day of each individual employee. That is, whether the employee works 3 hours per day or 8 hours per day, the absence will be counted as one (1) full leave day. This calculation could be altered at the discretion of the Superintendent in the event that the District works four 10-hour days during the summer. An absence of those days would equal 1.25 days of leave.

## **DONATION OF LEAVE TIME**

In compliance with MS Code 37-7-307(10) 1972 (amended 7/1/12), any employee of the Wilkinson County School District may donate a portion of his/her unused accumulated personal leave or sick leave to another employee of the school district who is suffering from a catastrophic injury or illness, as defined by state law, or who has a member of his or her immediate family suffering from a catastrophic injury or illness. Maternity leave is excluded from leave time donations unless there are medical complications involved with pregnancy or delivery.

(Ref.: Mississippi Code 37-7-308 and WCSD Board Policy)

The form for donating leave may be obtained from the District's Human Resources Department.

## **FAMILY AND MEDICAL ACT OF 1993**

(NOTE: For complete information, download the Department of Labor's Family and Medical Leave Act Employee Guide at:

<http://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/employeeguide.htm>)

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 require employers to provide up to 12 weeks unpaid, job-protected leave. Employees must have worked at least one year and for 1,250 hours for the previous 12 months and meet the required family and medical reasons. These reasons include birth, adoption or foster care placement of a child; the care of an employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition; or the employees own serious health condition. Application for family medical leave shall be presented to the school board for approval 30 days in advance of the expected leave time, except in cases of emergency. Following expiration of the 12-week eligibility period, employment will be terminated from the school district with notice of right to re-apply for positions which may be available.

A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job, or prevents the qualified member from participating in school or other daily activities.

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment may be met by a period of incapacity of more than 3 consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatment.

Employees may use any paid vacation leave, sick or personal leave already accumulated without loss of pay until the leave has been exhausted. Certified/licensed personnel are granted 10 days additional leave with substitute rate deducted from their salary. Classified or non-licensed

personnel are granted 10 days extended leave with the substitute rate deducted in accordance with item 6 of Policy GBCAA. If after use of accumulated paid leave 12 weeks have not been used, FMLA extends that leave period to 12 with the period added by federal law being unpaid.

In addition to actual leave, employees also become entitled to the continuation of health benefits during the period of leave. The employee is entitled to restoration to an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and conditions of employment. However, the law does not entitle employees to accrue seniority or employment benefits during the time they are on leave. Any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an employee's leave is retained by the employee.

When both, spouse are employed by Wilkinson County School District, the combined amount of leave for birth, adoption, and family illness may be limited to 12 weeks; however, personal illness would not be similarly limited in this situation.

The Wilkinson County School District may agree that an employee may take leave intermittently or on a reduced hour basis in connection with the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child.

An employee does not need to use this leave entitlement in one block. Leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary. Leave due to qualifying exigencies may also be taken on an intermittent basis.

When certified/licensed employees seek intermittent leave in connection with a family or personal illness (e.g. physical therapy or periodic care of a sick relative), and when sick leave would constitute at least 20 percent of the total number of working days in the period during which the leave would extend, the school district may require the employee to elect to take leave in a block (not intermittently) for the entire period or to transfer to an available alternative position within the school system that is equivalent in pay, for which the employee is qualified, and which better accommodates the intermittent situation.



There are three special rules for certified/licensed employees seeking to return from leave within the last three weeks of the semester.

1. If an employee begins any category of family and medical leave five or more weeks prior to the end of the semester, and the period of leave is for more than three weeks, then the school district can require an employee seeking to return within the last three weeks to wait until the next semester.
2. If the employee begins any category of family and medical leave (except personal sick leave) less than five weeks before the end of the semester and the period of leave is greater than two weeks, the school district can require an employee seeking to return within the last two weeks to wait until the next semester.
3. If the employee begins any category of family and medical leave (except personal sick leave) three or fewer weeks before the end of the semester and the period is greater than five working days, the school district may require the employee to wait until the next semester.

#### **OBLIGATION OF EMPLOYEES UNDER THE FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT**

1. Foreseeable Leave. When unpaid leave is in connection with birth, adoption, or foster placement, and is foreseeable, the employee must provide 30 day notice of the date when leave is to begin unless circumstances dictate otherwise. With respect to family or employee's illness that are foreseeable, the employee should make a reasonable effort to schedule treatment (including intermittent and reduced hour leave) as not to disrupt unduly the operations of the employer, subject to the approval of the employee's or family member's health care provider. Further, where foreseeable the employee must provide 30 day notice unless circumstances dictate otherwise. When 30 day notice is not possible, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with the employer's normal paid leave policies.

Employees must provide sufficient information for the employer to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions, the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need of hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform the employer if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified.

2. **Certification to Take Leave.** The school district may require that the employee provide timely certification from his/her health care provider, or a family member's health care provider as to: (1) the date that the condition commenced; (2) the duration; and (3) the necessity for the employee's inability to perform his/her job functions. Where doubt exist, as to certification, the school district, at its own expense, may designate a second health care provider (other than a school district employee) to provide a second opinion.....with the opinion of a third health care provider, if necessary, to be binding. Employees also may be required to provide a periodic recertification supporting the need for leave.
3. **Medical Certification to Return from Leave.** Upon return to work, the school district may require the employee to provide certification by his/her health care provider that the employee is able to resume work.
4. **Failure to Return from Leave/Recovery of Health Premiums.**  
If an employee fails to return to work after the leave period has expired (other than family or personal illness or other circumstances beyond control), the school district may recover premium expenditures extended during the leave period.

## **OBLIGATION OF EMPLOYER UNDER THE FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT**

Covered employers must inform employees requesting leave whether they are eligible under FMLA. If they are, the notice must specify any additional information required as well as the employees' rights and responsibilities. If they are not eligible, the employer must provide a reason for the ineligibility.

Covered employers must inform employees if leave will be designated as FMLA-protected and the amount of leave counted against the employee's leave entitlement. If the employer determines that the leave is not FMLA-protected, the employer must notify the employee.

## **MILITARY FAMILY LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS UNDER THE FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT**

Eligible employees with a spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active duty or call to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.

FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. A covered service member is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty or active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list.

## **UNLAWFUL ACTS BY EMPLOYERS**

FMLA makes it unlawful for any employer to:

- Interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right provided under FMLA;
- Discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating FMLA.

## **ENFORCEMENT**

An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer.

FMLA does not affect any Federal or State law prohibiting discrimination, or supersede any State or local law or collective bargaining agreement which provides greater family or medical leave rights.

## **JURY DUTY**

School districts may not recover from a school district employee the allotted pay for jury duty to help defray the cost of substitute pay. Therefore, employees summoned and serving on juries will not be required to reimburse the district any pay for that service and will not have a personal or sick leave day deducted from their total accrued leave. The employee must, however, complete an absence form as usual and attach a copy of some evidence of jury duty such as the summons or other document. School secretaries are to continue to turn this information in to the county office as usual and are to note on the absence from the jury duty service dates.

## **PAID LEAVE POLICIES**

### **1. Sick/Personal/Professional Leave**

**All staff shall be allowed the following minimum number of sick/personal/professional leave days applied each fiscal year (July 1-June 30) to their record leave based on the number of days worked:**

- Certified under 12 months will receive 2 personal days and 7 sick days
- Non-Certified under 12 months will receive 7 sick days
- All 12 month employees will receive 7 sick days and 10 vacation days

### **2. Carry-Over/Accumulation Feature**

Any unused portion of the allotted days in a given contract year shall be carried over to the next contract year, with maximum number of days accumulated being unlimited. The Public Employees' Retirement System allows accumulated sick leave to be applied toward retirement.

### **3. Extended Leave (Certified Staff)**

Once the employee has exhausted available leave, deduction in the amount of \$75.00 per day shall be made from the employee's pay for the next ten (10) days, regardless of the number of days the employee is contracted to serve during that contract year.

Days used in excess of the amounts set forth above shall result in a deduction at the employee's daily rate of pay.

### **4. Extended Leave (Classified Staff)**

Employees will be provided with 10 days extended leave each year above the accumulated days as shown above. Extended leave absences will be deducted at the minimum wage rate for the hours of the employee's workday. (Example: With minimum wage at \$7.25 (Eff. 7/2009 a 7-1/2 hour employee would have \$54.38 deducted.) After the 10 days of extended leave are exhausted the deduction will be at the employee's daily rate of pay.

### **5. Personal Leave**

Personal leave shall be defined as personal business or activities that require the employee to be away from duty when the business cannot be attended to during off-duty hours. Any request for personal leave must be approved by the Principal (on school campuses) or by the immediate supervisor in other locations.

**For employees working 180-200 days**, unused personal leave days during the year shall be carried over as additional personal days up to an accumulated total of 5 days. Once the accumulated total of personal leave days reaches 5, any unused personal leave will be transferred into accumulated sick leave.

**For all other employees**, unused personal leave days during the year will not accumulate as personal days, but will be transferred into accumulated sick leave.

Absences for personal business up to the accumulated total of the employee shall not result in a deduction in the pay in the pay of the employee. Absences for reason of personal business in excess of the employee's accumulated days shall result in a deduction in the pay of the employee at the daily rate of pay.

Personal leave shall not be approved on the first or last day of school, during times of record-keeping (teacher workdays), during staff development days, on the day previous to a school holiday or the day after a school holiday while school is in session. Further, personal leave during testing periods should not be requested but may be considered by the Principal in an **emergency** situation only.

## **6. Professional Leave**

Professional leave shall be defined as leave from duty to attend professional educational meetings, seminars, conferences, etc. Two categories of professional leave shall apply:

- a. Professional leave should be requested for the employee by the administration (Principal or immediate supervisor) and approved by the administration (Principal or immediate supervisor). Such leave shall not be deducted from either personal or sick leave and no deduction shall be made to the pay of the employee so approved.
  
- b. **Professional leave personally elected by the employee at their discretion but not deemed necessary by the administration (Principal or immediate supervisor):** A certified staff member may use any personal leave available to them for this purpose with no deduction in pay up to the number of accumulated personal days available, or if no personal days are available, deduction will be made at the employee's daily rate of pay.

## **UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION**

Employees are not eligible for unemployment benefits in the summer months between school terms, if there is reasonable assurance of employment for the same or similar work for the following school term. Employees who feel they may be entitled to unemployment benefits for job loss other than the annual summer break between school terms may apply for benefits through the Mississippi Employment Security Commission.

## **WORKER'S COMPENSATION**

It is the goal of the WCSD to provide a safe working environment for all staff. Employees should comply with all occupational safety, health policies and standards. However, should an accident resulting in an on-the-job injury occur, the first report of injury must be completed as soon as possible following any necessary medical treatment. (Failure to report an accident or injury may jeopardize an employee's eligibility for Worker's Compensation benefits.) The Principal/Supervisor must then report the incident to the Worker's Compensation Coordinator.

Employees are covered against certain loss of earnings due to on-the-job injury through a policy provided by the WCSD. No compensation will be allowed for an injury, illness or death due to willful misconduct, intentional self-inflicted injury, intoxication, or willful failure or refusal to use prescribed safety devices or failure to comply with prescribed safety procedures. Payment of benefits, medical bills, and compensation will be made in accordance with applicable Worker's Compensation laws of the state of Mississippi.

If an employee suffers an occupational injury or illness, the following steps should be taken:

- Any necessary first-aid treatment should be administered;
- When physically able, the employee should immediately report the injury or illness to the Superintendent/Principal;
- Both the employee and the Supervisor/Principal must complete a "Report of Accident/Injury" within 24 hours of the incident;
- The WCSD requires that all employees sustaining injury or illness due to an on-the-job accident obtain a post-accident drug screen

## **SECTION IV: ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **CELL PHONES**

Personal cell phones **must remain off** during instructional time, staff meetings, parent conferences, or staff development sessions. Staff members are to restrict personal calls to times when they are not responsible for students.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

It is imperative that all matters related to the WCSD, its students, parents and employees be kept confidential by all employees. Violations of the policy on confidentiality may result in disciplinary action up to and including employment termination.

### **DESTROYING/DEFACING SCHOOL PROPERTY**

Willful damage or destruction of school property shall not be tolerated. Violations of this policy will subject a violator to disciplinary action up to and including employment termination.

### **DRESS CODE**

All District employees and substitutes are expected to dress in a manner that is professionally appropriate for the duties assigned during the 180 student days. Attire should be clean, tasteful, and in good repair. Staff members should regard it their professional responsibility to dress in a manner that sets a good example for students and that conveys a positive professional image.

The following items will not be acceptable:

- Denim jeans of any color, however, denim skirts/jackets and denim slacks (tailored like dress pants ) are allowed
- Sweat suits, wind suits, or velour sport suits
- Shirts, blouses and sweaters that are tight or show cleavage and/or midriff
- Pants, skirts or dresses that are shorter than 2 inches above the top of the knee
- Footless tights or leggings allowed only under appropriate length of skirt/dress and meeting same criteria as students
- Tank tops or shirts with spaghetti straps (unless worn with a cover shirt)

- Tennis shoes-----however, allowed for elementary when necessary for duty purpose and for computer technicians
- Beach type flip flops
- Croc-style shoes
- Shorts of any type
- T-shirts---graphic T-shirts, typical crew-neck T-shirts
- Hats or caps
- Visible tattoos
- Earrings must be worn in the ear(s) only. No other body piercing with rings or other jewelry is permitted. No tongue studs will be allowed.

**Nurses, physical therapists, and occupational therapists may wear scrubs, and tennis shoes (others must be approved by supervisor) including SCD/Severe/profound SPED classroom teachers (who deal with bodily fluids)**

**Physical Education/Band Teachers**

- May wear hats/visors while outdoors only
- May wear shorts during warmer weather
- May NOT wear sweat suits
- May wear wind suits
- May wear tennis shoes

Reward Days/Special Event Days (set by supervisor): A School spirit T-shirt or an appropriate, tasteful blouse/shirt may be worn with jeans of appropriate length, fit and style. Tennis shoes may also be worn.

The maintenance, Child Nutrition and Transportation Departments will have their own dress standards.

If a staff member is unable to comply due to medical reasons, a doctor's note must be provided to the staff member's supervisor.

Current school identification badges must be worn by all employees while at work or on school-related duties.



## **PERSONAL TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT**

Approved: November 11, 1998

### **EXPENSES-ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL/REIMBURSEMENT**

Administrative personnel who have first been authorized by the Superintendent to travel in the performance of their duties shall be reimbursed their expenses by the school district for such travel as indicated below:

1. For each mile actually and necessarily traveled in the employee's automobile or other private motor vehicle \$.46 per mile. Employees are expected by the board to carpool where two (2) or more employees are traveling to the same destination. In such an event only one (1) travel expense allowance at the authorized rate per mile shall be allowed for one (1) trip.
2. When such travel is done by means of a public carrier or other means not involving a private motor vehicle, the employee shall receive as travel expense the actual fare or other expenses incurred in such travel. Travel by airline shall be at the tourist rate unless such space was unavailable. The employee shall certify that the tourist accommodations were not available if travel is performed in first class airline accommodations.
3. Employees shall be reimbursed for other actual expenses such as meals, lodging and other necessary expenses incurred in the course of such travel, subject to limitations placed on meals for intrastate and interstate official travel by the Mississippi Department of Finance & Administration.

**Current reimbursements are as follows:**

1. Single standard room rate accommodations
2. Maximum daily meal reimbursement for in-state travel & out - of - state travel shall be what is set by MS Department of Finance & Administration
3. Maximum mileage reimbursement shall be \$.46 per mile driven in private vehicle.
4. Actual registration fees
5. Actual fare or other expenses incurred in travel by public carrier
6. Incidental expenses—reasonable gratuities, parking, etc.

The superintendent shall comply with the rules and regulations of the Mississippi Department of Finance & Administration regarding itemized expense accounts upon return of the employee.

Telephone calls, laundry, dry cleaning, etc. shall be considered a personal expense

**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

It is critical to use every hour of instructional time available to us and also to model the importance of school attendance. Therefore, no principal or teacher is to suggest that students leave school early for any reason other than illness or behavior. For example, parents/grandparents are not to be encouraged to take students home after such events as Muffins or Mom, Doughnuts for Dads, school/class programs, etc., unless they occur at the end of the school day.

**SOCIAL NETWORKING**

All employees, faculty, and staff who participate in social networking websites shall not post any data, documents, photos, or inappropriate information on any website that might result in a disruption of classroom activity. Employees, faculty, and staff should not give social networking website passwords to students. Fraternalization via the internet between employees faculty, or staff and students is prohibited. Violations may result in disciplinary action. Nothing in this policy prohibits employees, faculty, staff and students from the use of an educational website, like schoolnotes.com, which is used solely for educational purposes.

## **STUDENT SUPERVISION**

In accordance with the Wilkinson County School District School Board Policy, to the extent reasonably possible, all students should be supervised at all times through the school day from arrival on campus till departure at the end of the day. Nothing herein removes the discretion allowed to principals, teachers, resource officers and administrators to implement this policy.

- Staff will be on duty to see all students as they arrive and leave campus, either from (a) Bus (b) parent drop off (c) car rider (d) walker. If you are assigned a duty post and are unable to be there, you must notify your immediate supervisor in advance so a replacement can be assigned to cover your post.
- Staff will be on duty in the hallways and teachers will be standing at the doorway of their classroom; observing the students as they enter the classroom.
- Teachers will have a bell ringing exercise to assist in encouraging students to get their class on time and to assist them with getting on task as soon as possible.
  
- Students will only be allowed out of class for emergency/valid reasons. Usually only one (1) student shall be allowed to leave the class at a time. All students will carry a hall pass when they are given permission to leave for an emergency/valid reason. Exception. Elementary campuses may routinely allow students to leave in pairs, but students must carry a note with them from the teacher.
- During class period's staff will be assigned to be in the hallways checking to ensure that all students not in class have hall passes and are going where they are supposed to be. Students who are caught without a pass shall be escorted back to their class and reported to a school administrator. Middle and High Schools only.
- Students will not be allowed to utilize the classroom phones except as approved by a school administrator in a crisis or early dismissal event.
- Playground duty-all staff will be posted so as they are able to supervise the entire playground area.
- At dismissal when the bell rings, staff will be on their assigned duty posts to supervise a safe and orderly departure from the building, the grounds, bus loading area, parent pickup area and the student driver parking lot.

## **USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

The Wilkinson County School District (WCSD) provides technology, network and Internet services for the specific and limited purpose of achieving the district's goals and accomplishing its educational and organizational purposes. WCSD technology, network and Internet services remain the property of the district. Users must comply with WCSD Board policies, approved Technology Plan and its supporting administrative regulations.

Use of district technology, network and Internet services does not create any expectation of privacy. The district reserves the right to search and/or monitor any information created, accessed, sent, received and/or stored in any format by any district user on the district equipment or equipment connected to the district network. Passwords, which allow access to network data and hardware need to be protected at all times. Users are not to disclose confidential information such as student information or district information to unauthorized individuals.

All WCSD employees that access technology, network and/or Internet services must abide by the board approved Network Acceptable Use Policy and the Internet Safety Policy. Both of these policies are available on the district website and available upon request from the Technology Department.

For further information regarding technology restrictions within the District, Board Policies should be reviewed as regards allowable and unauthorized use of the District technology resources, the Internet, and related matters.

### **Technology Related Purchases**

All technology related purchases must be approved and quoted from a Technology Department staff member. This includes any software (web-based and computer-based) and hardware (computers, interactive boards, network equipment/connections, etc.). Purchases will be monitored to ensure compliance.

### **Technology Work Orders**

All requests for technology assistance must be submitted via the Help Desk. Tickets will be assigned to the appropriate technician and prioritized by the Help Desk Staff.

## **WORKPLACE VIOLENCE**

The WCSD desires to maintain a work environment which is safe and secure in nature. Threats, threatening behavior, or any acts of violence against employees, students or other individuals on the premises will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination and/or criminal prosecution.

Any person engaging in violent behavior, such as, making substantial threats, intentionally hitting, kicking or striking a person or property on WCSD premises may be removed from the premises as quickly as possible and may be required to remain away from WCSD premises pending investigation of an incident.

All individuals who apply for or obtain a protective or restraining order that lists school sites as being protected areas must provide to the principal or supervisor a copy of the petition and declarations used to seek the order, a copy of any temporary protective or restraining order that is granted and a copy of any protective or restraining order that is made permanent.

Additionally, firearms or weapons of any type on District properties other than those maintained by duty authorized law enforcement officials are strictly prohibited, regardless of whether a valid permit has been issued to an individual. Violations by district employees will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

All personnel are responsible for immediately notifying responsible District authorities of any threats, threatening behavior or acts of violence which have been witnessed, received or otherwise reported. Such reports must be forwarded to the District's Security Division for investigation and appropriate action. Employees are responsible for making this report regardless of the relationship between the individual who initiated the threat or threatening behavior and the person or persons who were threatened or were the focus of the threatening behavior. If the principal or supervisor is not available, personnel should report the threat to another member of the district administration.

The district shall use the full protection of the court with respect to threats and intimidation of school personnel. Further, the district shall protect its employees through a comprehensive liability insurance program and shall hold harmless and defend any district employee from claims for damages caused or alleged to have been caused in whole or in part by the employee while performing assigned duties as an employee of the district. However, the district shall not be obligated to assume any costs or judgments held against an employee when damages are proved to be due to the employee's willful negligence, violation of the law, or criminal act as determined by a court of law.

**SB 2452**

**Employment of substitute teachers; clarify deduction of cost of substitutes from pay of absent licensee.**

- For 10 days after a teacher has exhausted all sick leave, the school district must pay them for an additional 10 days, which can be full pay or full pay less a substitute teacher pay.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT AND UNDERSTANDING OF 2018-2019  
EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the Wilkinson County School District's Employee Handbook. By my signature below, I confirm that I understand that I have a responsibility to review this handbook and to adhere to rules, regulations and policies contained herein. If there are questions about any of the contents of this handbook, I understand that I may consult with the District's Human Resources Department or other appropriate District authority for clarification.

I further understand that this handbook does not guarantee employment for non-contracted employees nor does it supersede the terms and conditions of employment guarantees contained in the employment contract issued to certified staff.

I further understand that this handbook is a guide and that the rules, regulations, and policies set forth herein are based on approved policies of the Wilkinson County School District, and that the Board of Education reserves the right to change or amend any policies governing my employment which may supersede or eliminate policies and procedures contained in this handbook with or without notice.

I understand that, should any provision of this handbook conflict with Board Policy and/or with state or federal law or regulation, the relevant policy, law or regulation shall govern.

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_