



*Helping All Students
Achieve and Succeed*

POLICY MANUAL

The Jackson County Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, or age in its programs and activities, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

Jackson County Board of Education Policy Manual

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Preface

The Jackson County Board of Education is established under authority of state law for the purpose of exercising general supervision and administration of the public schools serving school age children who reside within the county limits Jackson County, and of promoting the interests of the County Schools and the children they serve. Those responsibilities are met, in part, by the adoption and implementation of formal policies by which the principles that guide decision making are established.

Policies are generally broad statements of principle and purpose and are intended to serve as a framework for decision making and administrative action rather than as a manual for day-to-day decision making and action. Policies can nevertheless establish specific substantive standards and requirements, including standards of personal and professional conduct, the violation of which may result in disciplinary sanctions or other adverse consequences. However, policies do not restrict the ability of the Board or its employees to respond reasonably and flexibly to unexpected contingencies, emergencies, and other conditions that call for a response that is tailored to unique or special circumstances.

Policies should be construed as a whole and with reference to related policies and applicable law. Although policies are adopted partly for the purpose of meeting the requirements of pertinent law, they do not establish or create a legal right, claim, entitlement, or interest to or in any title, position, assignment, duty, work location, level or rate of compensation, benefit, or term of employment.

Any provision, feature, or aspect of Board policy that does not conform to governing law should be deemed void and superseded by such law. Editorial changes that do not affect the meaning, substance, or application of a policy may be made by the Board without advance public notice and comment. In general, the Board reserves the right to adopt, revise, interpret, amend, repeal, suspend, or apply policies according to its assessment of the needs and interests of the school system, subject only to such limitations on the exercise of such prerogatives as may be imposed by law.

Definitions

Except as otherwise expressly provided in individual policies or required by the context, the following terms have the meanings given below:

- a. “Board” or “Board of Education” means and refers to the Jackson County Board of Education.
- b. “State” means and refers to the State of Alabama.
- c. “System” or “school system” means and refers to all schools, facilities, and operations of the Jackson County Board of Education.
- d. “State Board of Education” means and refers to the Board that exercises general control and supervision over the public schools of the State of Alabama as constituted and authorized by ALA. CODE § 16-3-1, *et seq.* (1975).
- e. “Alabama (State) Department of Education” means and refers to the state agency that is charged with implementing the policies, procedures, and regulations of the State Board of Education as provided in ALA. CODE § 16-2-1, *et seq.* (1975).
- f. “He,” “his,” or “him” means and includes all genders.
- g. “Law” includes local, state, and federal statutes, regulations, ordinances, court decisions, and binding administrative orders or directives.
- h. “Certified” or “certificated,” when used to modify the words “teacher,” “personnel,” “employee,” “staff,” or similar terms, means and refers to Board employees who hold certificates or comparable forms of licensure issued by the State Superintendent of Education under authority of ALA. CODE § 16-23-1 (1975).
- i. “Classified” or “support,” when used to modify the words “personnel,” “employee,” “staff,” or similar terms, means and refers to Board employees who do not hold certificates issued by the State Superintendent of Education under authority of ALA. CODE § 16-23-1 (1975) and who, in general, hold employment positions of the type identified in ALA. CODE § 16-24C-3(2) (1975), of the Code of Alabama (1975).

Citations to the United States Code, the Code of Alabama, and the Alabama Administrative Code are all intended to refer the reader to sources that either serve as legal authority for the policy provisions or provide additional or more detailed information regarding the subject matter of the policy. The citations are not exhaustive and are subject to repeal, amendment, or invalidation by court rulings. Such changes may not be reflected in the policy.

I. Governing Principles

1.1 *Mission Statement*

It is the mission of the Jackson County School District to help all students achieve and succeed.

II. School Board Operations

2.1 Board Composition and Organization

- 2.1.1 Composition – The Jackson County Board of Education is composed of five (5) members who are elected to six (6) year terms by qualified electors of Jackson County, Alabama. Members may not be employees of the Board.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §§ 16-8-1, 2 (1975)]

- 2.1.2 Officers – The Board will elect from its members a president and vice-president at the annual meeting of the Board held in November of each year. The Superintendent will serve as both the Board's chief executive officer and secretary. If the Superintendent's position is vacant, the Board may appoint one of its members to act as secretary until such time as the Superintendent's position is filled.

[Reference: ALA. CODE § 16-8-4 (1975)]

- 2.1.3 Committees – The Board may divide itself into standing or special committees for the purpose of more efficiently conducting Board business, but no recommendation or action of any committee will bind the Board without the affirmative vote of a majority of the whole Board.

2.2 Duties and Authority of Board Members

The Board has the authority and responsibility to administer and supervise the public schools that are located within Jackson County, Alabama. Board authority will only be exercised collectively through action taken in accordance with applicable statutory and parliamentary procedures. Individual Board members have no authority to bind the Board or to act on behalf of the Board except when authorized to do so by official action of the Board.

2.3 Board Member Compensation

Board members may be compensated for their services and reimbursed for expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties as authorized by law.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-8-5 (1975)]

2.4 Board Member Training

Board members will participate in orientation and ongoing training provided by the Alabama Association of School Boards or approved in advance through an application process administered by AASB to develop and enhance their knowledge and effectiveness as Board members and to improve Board governance and operations in accordance with the requirements of state law.

[Reference: Ala. Code §16-1-41 (1975)]

2.5 Board Meetings

- 2.5.1 General Provisions – The Board will hold regular and specially called meetings in accordance with applicable statutory requirements and as dictated by the needs of the school system. All meetings of the Board will be open to the public except as may otherwise be required or permitted by law.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §36-25A-1, *et seq.* (1975)]

- 2.5.2 Time and Place – The times and places for regularly scheduled meetings will be established by the Board at the annual meeting held in November of each year, provided that the Board may modify its meeting schedule in the exercise of its sound discretion. Public notice of the dates, times, and places of meetings of the Board will be given in the manner prescribed by law. Board members will be given such advance notice of specially called meetings as is practicable under the circumstances.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §§ 16-8-4, 36-25A-1 (1975)]

- 2.5.3 Special (Called) Meetings – Special meetings shall be called by the President of the Board or by the Superintendent. Notice of the call shall be simultaneously conveyed to all board members and to the Superintendent, together with a statement of the reason for the call and the matters to be addressed at the meeting. The meeting shall be set as soon as is practicable, taking into account the reasonable availability of board members and the Superintendent, the urgency of the matters to be addressed, and the necessity to provide public notice of the meeting as provided by law.

- 2.5.4 Public Participation – In order to permit orderly scheduling of public remarks and the inclusion of such in the agenda, anyone wishing to speak before the Board, either as an individual, or as a member of a group, should inform the Superintendent's office in writing of the desire to do so and of the topic to be discussed as early as possible, but in no event less than five days prior to the meeting.

Each person/delegation will be permitted 4 minutes to address the board. Speakers may make statements about their particular concern with school operations and programs and shall observe appropriate decorum in doing so. The Board will listen but will not take any action at that time. The Board will not hear personal complaints against particular school personnel or any person connected with the school system in public session, as other means are available for presenting legitimate complaints involving school system personnel to the Board.

- 2.5.5 Rules of Order – Board meetings will be conducted in accordance with the most recently revised edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*, provided that strict adherence to the formalities of the Rules of Order may be reasonably relaxed in order to facilitate conduct of Board businesses. A majority of the whole Board will constitute a quorum for purposes of transacting Board business except as may

otherwise be provided by law. Deviations from or errors in executing parliamentary procedure do not invalidate Board actions or decisions that are otherwise consistent with the intent of the Board.

[Reference: ALA. CODE § 16-8-4 (1975)]

2.6 *Superintendent's Qualifications, Responsibilities, and Authority*

2.6.1 **Qualifications** –The county Superintendent of Education shall be chosen for his/her general fitness and character and shall be a person of recognized ability as a school administrator. No person shall be eligible for appointment by any county board of education or for any political party nomination, or for election to the office of county superintendent of education unless he/she:

- a. Holds an Alabama certificate in administration and supervision at a master's level based upon requirements established by the State Board of Education for such certificate;
- b. Has had not less than three years classroom experience and three years administrative experience in public school work at the time of assuming office;
- c. Submits proof to the State Superintendent of Education of three years of successful educational experience as a teacher, principal, supervisor, superintendent, educational administrator or instructor in school administration during the five years preceding his/her appointment or election;
- d. Submits proof to the county board of education that he/she holds a degree from a recognized four-year college or university; and
- e. Submits proof to the county board that he/she is knowledgeable in school administration.
- f. Pursuant to local legislative action, the Jackson County Superintendent must reside within Jackson County.

In every county where the county superintendent of education is elected by popular vote, he/she shall be nominated and elected in the same manner as other county officers are nominated and elected under the state election laws.

- 2.6.2 Role, Responsibilities, and Term – The Superintendent serves as the chief executive officer of and secretary to the Board. The Superintendent may exercise such prerogatives and duties as are prescribed by statute, as are delegated or specified in an employment contract, or as are otherwise lawfully assigned by the Board. The Superintendent must possess the minimum qualifications for the position that are established by law. The term of the Superintendent's will be established by law.

[Reference: ALA. CODE § 16-9-1, *et seq.* (1975)]

- 2.6.3 Scope of Executive and Administrative Authority – In addition to specific grants of authority set forth in particular Board policies, the Superintendent is authorized to develop and implement such lawful and reasonable rules, regulations, operating procedures, administrative directives, or like measures as are directed to compliance with legal requirements or attainment of the objects of Board policy.

2.7 *Recordkeeping and Retention of Board Records*

Board records will be maintained by the Superintendent in the manner and for the length of time required by law. Otherwise, records will be retained and disposed of in accordance with procedures that will include a records retention and destruction schedule to be prepared and promulgated by the Superintendent and approved by the Board.

2.8 *Association Membership*

The Board will maintain membership in the Alabama Association of School Boards.

III. Fiscal Management

3.1 *Chief School Financial Officer*

The Board will appoint a Chief School Financial Officer to oversee the financial operations of the Board and to perform the duties of the position that are set forth in state law and regulations. The Chief School Financial Officer may also be referred to as the Chief School Finance Officer.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-13A-4 (1975); Ala. Admin. Code 290-2-5-.01, *et seq.*]

3.2 *Budget*

A budget will be developed and approved for each fiscal year, which extends from October 1st to September 30th of the following year. Preparation, presentation, submission, and approval of the budget will be undertaken and completed as provided for in state law and regulations, including providing an opportunity for public input regarding the budget. Budgets will be “balanced” such that the expenditures set forth in the budget for the fiscal year will not exceed revenues and any fund balances on hand.

The Superintendent or Chief School Financial Officer will inform the Board, before the Board votes on a budget or budget amendment that will prevent the establishment or maintenance of a one-month’s operating balance. A one-month’s operating balance shall be determined by dividing the General Fund expenditures and fund transfers out by 12. In determining the General Fund expenditures and fund transfers out, the proposed budget or budget amendment shall be used.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-13-140, *et seq.* (1975)]

3.3 *Accounting*

Generally accepted accounting standards and procedures will be employed in the administration of all Board and school finances. All Board and school accounts will be reconciled to financial records. All reports required by the State Department of Education will be completed in a timely manner with copies provided to Board members.

3.4 *Finance Manual Authorized*

Financial transactions will be administered in accordance with a general finance manual and any local school finance manual that may be developed by the Superintendent or the Chief School Financial Officer and approved by the Board. The finance manual(s) will establish and describe specific practices and procedures that are to be followed in connection with all phases of financial administration, including, but not limited to such matters as accounting, bookkeeping, inventory maintenance, payroll, reconciliation, fund security, receipting, disbursement, purchasing, disposal of property, banking, and investments. The practices, procedures, and requirements set forth in the manual will be made available upon request.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-13A-1 (1975)]

3.5 *Fund Balance Policy in Accordance with Government Accounting Standards Board ("GASB") Statement No. 54*

3.5.1 Governmental Funds Definitions – The following definitions will be used in reporting activity in governmental funds. The Board may or may not report all fund types in any given reporting period, based on actual circumstances and activity.

- a. The General Fund is used to account for and report all financial resources not accounted for and reported in another fund.
- b. Special Revenue Funds are used to account for and report the proceeds of specific revenue sources that are restricted or committed to expenditure for specified purposes other than debt service or capital projects.
- c. Debt Service Funds are used to account for and report financial resources that are restricted, committed, or assigned to expenditure for principal and interest, even if it is being accumulated for future years' payments. Debt Service Funds should be used to report resources if legally mandated.
- d. Capital Projects Funds are used to account for and report financial resources that are restricted, committed, or assigned to expenditure for capital outlays, including the acquisition or construction of capital facilities and other capital assets.

3.5.2 Fund Balances – Fund balances will be reported in governmental funds under the following five categories using the definitions provided by GASB Statement No. 54:

- a. Nonspendable fund balances include amounts that cannot be spent because they are either (a) not in spendable form or (b) legally or contractually required to be maintained in-tact. Examples of nonspendable fund balance reserves for which fund balance shall not be available for financing general operating expenditures include: inventories, prepaid items, and long-term receivables.
- b. Restricted fund balances consist of amounts that are subject to externally enforceable legal restrictions imposed by creditors, grantors, contributors, or laws and regulations of other governments; or through constitutional provisions or enabling legislation. Examples of restricted fund balances include: restricted grants.
- c. Committed fund balances consist of amounts that are subject to a purpose constraint imposed by formal action of the Board before the end of the fiscal year and that require the same level of formal action to remove the constraint.

- d. Assigned fund balances consist of amounts that are intended to be used by the school system for specific purposes. The Board authorizes the Superintendent or Chief School Finance Officer to make a determination of the assigned amounts of fund balance. Such assignments may not exceed the available (spendable, unrestricted, uncommitted) fund balance in any particular fund. Assigned fund balances require the same level of authority to remove the constraint.
- e. Unassigned fund balances include all spendable amounts not contained in the other classifications. This portion of the total fund balance in the general fund is available to finance operating expenditures.

3.5.3 Priority – When expenditure is incurred for purposes for which both restricted and unrestricted (committed, assigned, or unassigned) amounts are available, it shall be the policy of the Board to consider restricted amounts to have been reduced first. When an expenditure is incurred for the purposes for which amounts in any of the unrestricted fund balance classifications could be used, it shall be the policy of the Board that committed amounts would be reduced first, followed by assigned amounts and then unassigned amounts.

3.5.4 Review and Reporting – The Board of Education along with the Superintendent and Chief School Finance Officer will periodically review all restricted, committed, and assigned fund balances. The Chief School Finance Officer will prepare and submit an annual report of all restricted, committed and assigned funds for the Board of Education.

3.6 Audits

Business and financial transactions of the Board and the records of Board financial accounts will be audited in accordance with state law and appropriate auditing and accounting standards.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-13A-7 (1975)]

3.7 Inventories

The Superintendent is required to account for all materials, equipment, and other Board property. Inventory procedures will include an annual inventory and evaluation of tangible Board property (including fixed assets and supplemental property), to be completed no later than the end of each fiscal year, with appropriate reports submitted to the Superintendent and Chief School Financial Officer. Inventories will be kept on forms prescribed or approved by the Chief School Financial Officer. Inventory forms will show items on hand at the beginning of the fiscal year, items lost, items disposed of, items purchased or otherwise added during the year, and items on hand at the end of the fiscal year.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §§16-13A-1, 6 (1975)]

3.8 *Purchasing*

Purchases will be made in accordance with an approved purchase order system that will include such requirements and procedures as may be established in the Board Finance Manual.

3.9 *Deposit and Expenditure of Funds*

3.9.1 Deposits – All funds of the Board will be deposited with qualified depositories, as defined by law, in the manner prescribed by the Chief School Financial Officer or the Finance Manual.

3.9.2 Investments – The Board authorizes the investment of surplus funds in the manner prescribed by law and approved administrative guidelines.

3.9.3 Expenditures – The Superintendent or his designee, subject to applicable law, policies and Board-approved budget limitations, may expend funds for budgeted operation expenditures without advance Board approval of specific expenditures.

All such expenditures shall be included in the monthly expenditure report to the Board.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-13A-8 (1975)]

3.9.4 Competitive Bid Law – All purchases will be made in compliance with the competitive bid law, when applicable, and with such corresponding rules, regulations, and procedures as may be set forth in the Board's Finance Manual. The Superintendent is authorized to enter into cooperative purchasing agreements with other school systems or local governments as may be permitted by law.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-13B-1, *et seq.* (1975)]

3.9.5 Authorized Signatures – Checks drawn on the general fund or any special fund, with the exception of school accounts, require the signature of the Superintendent and the Chief School Financial Officer or their alternates as designated by the Board. Checks drawn on school accounts require the signature of the principal or an alternate as designated by the Board. All checks used will be prenumbered. Checks drawn on Board funds may be signed and processed by electronic means, under the direction of the Chief School Financial Officer or Superintendent.

3.10 *Office of Management and Budget Part 200*

Federal funds subject to the requirements of the Office of Management and Budget's Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements—Part 200 ("Part 200") will be subject to the following policies:

3.10.1 Cash Management for Federal Funds –The Board will minimize the time between the receipt of federal funds from the United States Treasury, the Alabama Department of Education, or other pass-through entity, and the disbursement of

those federal funds. Federal funds will only be requested to meet immediate cash needs for reimbursement not covered by prior receipts and anticipated disbursements that are generally fixed, such as monthly program salaries and benefits. Disbursements will be made within twenty business days after receipt of funds.

The Chief School Financial Officer will maintain financial records that account for the receipt, obligation, and expenditure of each federal program fund. Cash balances for each federal program fund and for the aggregate of all federal program funds will be monitored by the Chief School Financial Officer or designee.

Board procedures to minimize the cash balances in federal program funds are expected to prevent the aggregate cash balances of federal program funds from earning \$500 or more for the fiscal year if maintained in interest-bearing accounts. The federal program funds, with the exception of Child Nutrition Program funds, will not be maintained in an interest-bearing bank account if the Chief Financial Officer determines that banking requirements for minimum or average balances are so high that an interest-bearing account would not be feasible. Federal program funds will be maintained in insured checking accounts that are subject to the state requirements for public deposits under the Security for Alabama Funds Enhancement program.

3.10.2 Determination of Allowable Costs –

- a. Before instituting a financial transaction that will require the expenditure of federal funds the federal program director and the Chief School Financial Officer or designee will determine that the proposed transaction meets the requirements for allowable costs for the federal program. Actions to determine allowable costs will assure that:
 1. The proposed expenditure is included in the federal program budget;
 2. The proposed expenditure is reasonable and necessary for the federal program;
 3. The proposed expenditure is consistent with procedures for financial transactions of the board including:
 - A. Purchase order approval procedures;
 - B. Contract review and approval procedures;
 - C. Applicable competitive purchasing procedures; and
 - D. Documentation supports allowability of transaction.

- b. Before payments are made from federal funds the federal program director and the Chief School Financial Officer or designee will determine that the federal program expenditure complies with generally accepted accounting principles and complies with state, local, and federal laws, rules and regulations.

3.10.3 Travel Policy – Travel costs are the expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence, and related items incurred by board employee who are in travel status on official business of the board. The board’s travel policy provides for reimbursement and payments for travel costs of employees paid from federal funds that is consistent with the travel costs for board employees paid from state or local funds.

3.10.4 Conflict of Interest Policy – Generally, a conflict of interest exists when a board member, board employee, or agent of the board participates in a matter that is likely to have a direct effect on his or her personal and financial interests. A financial interest may include, but not limited to, stock ownership, partnership, trustee relationship, employment, potential employment, or a business relationship with an applicant, vendor, or entity. A board member, board employee, or agent of the board may not participate in his or her official capacity in a matter that is likely to have a direct and predictable effect on his or her financial interests.

A board member, board employee, or agent of the board will abide by the Federal and state laws and regulations that address conflict of interest standards. In general, the Federal rules provide that:

No employee, officer, or agent of the board shall participate in selection, or in the award or administration of a contract supported by Federal funds if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest. Such a conflict would arise when the employee, officer, or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs, or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a financial or other interest in a tangible personal benefit from the firm considered for a contract. The board’s officers, employees, or agents will neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors or anything of monetary value from contractors, potential contractors, or parties to subcontractors.

The board’s conflict of interest policies include adherence to the Alabama Ethics Law, as it may be amended from time to time, which defines conflict of interest as:

A conflict on the part of a public official or public employee between his or her private interests and the official responsibilities inherent in an office of public trust. A conflict of interest involves any action, inaction, or decision by a public official or public employee in the discharge of his or her official duties which would materially affect his or her financial

interest or those of his or her family members or any business with which the person is associated in a manner different from the manner it affects the other members of the class to which he or she belongs.

A board member, board employee, or agent of the board may not review applications, proposals, or participate in the evaluation or selection process where his or her participation in the review process would create the appearance that he or she is: (a) giving preferential treatment; (b) losing independence and impartiality; (c) making decisions outside official and appropriate channels; or (d) harming the public's confidence in the integrity of the board.

Situations and circumstances presenting an actual conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest should be brought to the immediate attention of the Superintendent. A board employee, board members, or agent of the board who has knowledge of a possible conflict of interest should identify the conflict and notify the Superintendent. The Superintendent will document his or her actions related to the reported conflict of interest. Resolution can consist of disqualification, recusal, waiver, or other appropriate measures. Appropriate measures may include reporting a conflict of interest to the State Ethics Commission, the Alabama State Board of Education, or the appropriate federal agency.

3.10.5 Procurement Policy – The board will follow state laws for the procurement of property and services. The primary state procurement laws for Alabama school board are: Alabama Competitive Bid Laws (Chapter 13B of Title 16, Code of Alabama 1975); Joint Information Technology Purchasing Agreement (Chapter 13B of Title 16, Code of Alabama 1975); and Public Works Law (Title 39, Code of Alabama 1975).

To the extent allowed by state laws, the board will utilize state, local, regional, and national purchasing agreements where appropriate for the procurement or use of goods and services. All procurement transactions are subject to the board's Conflict of Interest Policy and the procurement decisions of the board will:

- a. Avoid acquisition of unnecessary or duplicative goods and services;
- b. Use the most economical and efficient approach for acquisitions;
- c. Award acquisitions contracts only to responsible contractors possessing the ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of the proposed procurement;
- d. Consider contractor integrity, compliance with public policy, record of past performance, and financial and technical resources prior to awarding procurement contracts;
- e. Maintain records sufficient to document the history of the procurement; and,

- f. Conduct procurement transactions in a manner that provides full and open competition.

Procurement transactions for federal programs and child nutrition programs that are not subject to the state procurement laws but exceed the aggregate amount of the federal micro-purchase threshold, will be obtained by utilizing price or rate quotes from two or more qualified sources. State procurement laws include requirements that comply with the other Uniform Administrative Requirements for procurement of property and services.

The board will request proposals for those professional service contracts (excluding architectural and engineering services) that are exempt under state procurement laws if the contracts exceed \$250,000 and will be paid from federal or child nutrition program funds. The board will utilize a team of three or more qualified individuals to conduct a technical evaluation of proposals received and for selecting recipients. As a part of the evaluation, the individuals on the evaluation team will sign an assurance that each of the individuals is in compliance with the board's conflict of interest policy.

3.11 *Employee Compensation*

- 3.11.1 Salaries and Pay Rates – Board employees will be compensated at rates of pay that are approved by the Board. When required, such salary or compensation rates will be included in a schedule to be developed and adopted by the Board in accordance with state law.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-13-231.1 (1975)]

- 3.11.2 Local Supplements – School-related booster or school support organizations may fund local supplements for individual Board employees if the Board approves such supplemental payments or if the payment is reported on the monthly expenditure report to the Board. Such payments may be approved only if the following conditions are satisfied:

- a. The payment is voted on and approved by the membership of the booster or support organization that proposes to fund the supplement at a regular meeting of the organization;
- b. Funding for the payment must be sufficient to cover benefits, expenses, and other payroll costs, contributions, and liabilities, if any;
- c. Sufficient unobligated funds are on hand to provide the supplemental payment;
- d. A check and letter of authorization for the payment is sent to the Board no later than the payroll cutoff date for the month in which the payment is to be made;

- e. The payments are accepted by the employee with the understanding that they do not constitute a part of any employment contract, salary schedule, or legal obligation that is enforceable against the Board, and that the Board has no continuing obligation to maintain supplemental payments to any employee that are provided, funded, or underwritten by a booster club, support organization, or similar third party; and
- f. The payments are subject to any payroll deductions that are required by law.

3.11.3 Salary Administration – Employees are expected to fulfill the work requirements of the position held for the full term of their appointment. Compensation will be prorated to reflect the number of days actually worked, subject to appropriate adjustments, credits, and allowances for available leave. Salaries for full time employees will be paid over twelve months, regardless of the contract term. Personnel will be paid in accordance with customary payroll procedures, which may be modified from time to time as the needs of the system require. No employee is entitled to compensation except for work performed by the employee in accordance with an approved contract or the applicable terms of appointment. Compensation may be withheld pending the employee's timely, accurate, and complete submission of all required records, data, and reports.

3.11.4 Salary Deductions – Mandatory salary deductions will be made in accordance with applicable law. Employees are required to complete and submit all forms and provide such information as may be required or reasonably required for such purpose. The Board will make voluntary salary deductions upon written request of the individual employee as permitted by law.

Deductions for membership dues will be made for organizations with at least 25% of Board employees as active members, as established by membership lists provided to the Board by the organization, if such deductions are allowed under state law and the organization has timely provided to the Board all certifications and expenditure reports required by law. Such membership lists will be corrected, updated, and returned to the organization no later than November 10 of each school year. Deductions shall be deducted for each succeeding year unless the employee revokes the deductions in writing on or before September 15 of that year. Deductions will remain constant during the school year, except by the authorization of the Superintendent. The Board will not be liable for any good faith error made in implementing a salary deduction that has been authorized by the employee.

Upon termination of employment, any amounts owed under the terms of an employee authorization will be deducted from the employee's final pay.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-22-6; 17-17-5]

3.11.5 Minimum Wage and Overtime – In compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act ("FLSA"), the Board will pay required minimum hourly wages and overtime to

all employees who are not exempt employees under the FLSA. For purposes of determining overtime, the workweek begins at 12:01 a.m. on Sunday and ends at midnight on the succeeding Saturday. All non-exempt employees who work more than forty (40) hours in a work week will be paid overtime. Employees must accurately report all time worked for the Board. Non-exempt employees are not authorized to work more than forty (40) hours in a workweek without specific direction or authorization to do so by the Superintendent, the employee's supervisor, or the supervising school principal.

- 3.11.6 Compensatory Time – Non-exempt employees who work more than forty (40) hours in a workweek may, upon agreement between the employee and the Board, be paid overtime in the form of compensatory time. All compensatory time must be approved by immediate supervisor and/or Superintendent. Compensatory time will be based on time worked beyond forty (40) hours in a workweek and will be recorded in minimum time units of one-quarter hour rounded to the nearest quarter of an hour. No more than two hundred forty (240) hours of compensatory time may be accumulated. The Board reserves the right to require an employee to use compensatory time as its needs require and may “pay down” any compensatory time balance in its discretion. The Superintendent is hereby authorized to develop procedures and forms for use in implementing this policy.

3.12 *Expense Reimbursement*

Board members and employees will be reimbursed for reasonable travel and subsistence expenses incurred in connection with official Board business. Reimbursement will be in accordance with Board approved rates and such procedures and standards for submitting and documenting such expenditures as may be developed by the Chief School Financial Officer or provided in the approved Finance Manual.

3.13 *Fees, Payments, and Rentals*

- 3.13.1 Facility Use Fees – The Superintendent is authorized to develop a schedule of reasonable fees for use of Board facilities and property by individuals, groups, or organizations.
- 3.13.2 Copying and Other Charges – The Superintendent is authorized to establish a schedule of reasonable charges which will be applied uniformly in response to requests for copies of documents and records. Nothing in this policy or in any schedule of charges authorized hereunder creates or expands any entitlement to copies of records or access thereto beyond that which is established by law or specific Board policy.

3.14 *School Accounts*

Funds held in school accounts, regardless of the funding source, will be maintained and accounted for in accordance with the Board's Finance Manual, Local School Finance Manual, and such procedures, rules, and regulations as may be developed by the Chief School Financial Officer or the Superintendent. The principal is ultimately responsible for all school funds and for ensuring that such funds are properly accounted for and secured.

3.15 *Authority to Execute Contracts*

3.15.1 General Authority – The president of the Board, or, in the absence of the president, the vice-president, will have authority to execute contracts on behalf of the Board upon approval of the contract by the Board. The Board may also authorize the Superintendent to execute contracts on behalf of the Board as its chief executive officer.

3.15.2 Limitation on Authority to Bind the Board – Principals and other administrators will have authority to enter into agreements with third parties only when such agreements are made in accordance with Board policy, finance manual(s) created under authority of Board policy, or with the express authorization of the Superintendent.

3.16 *Affiliated Organizations*

3.16.1 School Sponsored Organizations – School-sponsored student organizations will be subject to Board policies and procedures concerning fiscal management and will maintain organization funds in school accounts. All books, records, and official documents pertaining to the management of such organizations will be maintained at the local school and will be subject to examination and audit by the Board, the principal, or the State Examiners of Public Accounts. The use of funds collected, generated, or held by such organizations will be determined in accordance with the constitution, charter, or by-laws of the organization, with oversight by the sponsor of the organization, and subject to approval of the principal.

3.16.2 Booster Clubs, Parent-Teacher Associations, and Other Affiliated Organizations – Other organizations that are affiliated with local schools are permitted to operate or raise funds on Board property or at Board sanctioned events only in conformity with Board and State Department of Education policies, procedures, and standards concerning the fiscal management of such organizations. An affiliated organization must make its books and financial records available to the Board for review or audit.

3.17 *Fundraising*

Fundraising activities will be permitted on school or Board property only if the following criteria are satisfied:

- a. The activity will be held at a time and in a manner that will not be disruptive to the instructional program or to any other school or school system activity or function;
- b. The activity is designed and intended to support a *bona fide* school or school system program or activity, or an activity that is consistent with the mission and purposes of the school system;
- c. Adequate provision has been made for the security and proper accounting of funds collected;
- d. Other information regarding the nature, scope, and purpose of the activity is provided to school officials upon request; and
- e. Appropriate arrangements have been made for any special activities to be held in conjunction with the fundraising event.
- f. The activity is approved by the principal.

3.18 *Employee On-Line Fundraising and Crowdfunding*

Any property, money, or other resources that are obtained by a Board employee through grants, fundraising, online giving, or like means in the name of or for the benefit of the school system or its students becomes the property of the school system and are subject to board policies and procedures governing board property and resources. The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures governing the approval and administration of any outside fundraising or crowdfunding activities.

3.19 *Child Nutrition*

The Superintendent may enter into a written agreement with the Child Nutrition Program at the State Department of Education in order to procure food and other food related products and services. The Board will comply with applicable state and federal laws and regulations governing participation in such child nutrition program.

Charged meals are not considered an allowable expense. Therefore, all uncollected charges will be the responsibility of the school where the charge was made. All charges must be paid to the Child Nutrition Program at the end of the school year using non-public funds.

The Superintendent or his designee is authorized to develop procedures governing the charging of meals for students with no money for breakfast or lunch or a negative account balance and for the payment of charged meals to the CNP program at the end of the school year.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-080-030-.01, *et seq.*]

3.20 *Worthless Checks*

The Board will take action to collect the amount of a worthless check in accordance with such corresponding rules, regulations, and procedures as may be developed by the Superintendent or his designee and/or as set forth in the Board's Finance Manual.

3.21 *Classroom Instructional Support*

The Superintendent shall develop procedures by which state allotments for classroom instructional support are made available for use by classroom instructors in the manual and for the purposes authorized by statute and corresponding state regulations.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-1-8.1(b)(7).]

IV. General Administration

4.1 Security / Access to Schools

- 4.1.1 Security Measures Authorized – The Superintendent, principals, and facility administrators are authorized to take reasonable and lawful measures to protect against personal injury, trespass, vandalism, theft, and like threats to personal safety, property damage, and financial loss to or on Board property or at school functions and activities. System personnel should be made aware of any extraordinary or special measures that may be proposed in anticipation of or in response to any unusual security threat or risk (e.g., unusual surveillance, assignment of additional security personnel).
- 4.1.2 Access Restrictions Authorized – The Superintendent, principals, and facility administrators are authorized to regulate and restrict access to Board schools, buildings, and facilities in order to maintain appropriate security, minimize disruption and distraction within the learning environment, or to avoid a potential risk of harm to a student or employee. To that end, the Superintendent, principals, and facility administrators are authorized to implement building-level requirements governing access to Board owned or controlled buildings, grounds, property, events, and activities by school and non-school personnel, including family members and relatives, vendors, attorneys, and other visitors, and to adopt “check-in” and “check-out” requirements for students and employees.
- 4.1.3 Adult Sex Offenders – Adult sex offenders who have been convicted of a sex offense involving a minor must:
- a. notify the principal of the school or his designee before entering school property or attending the Pre-K-12 school activity;
 - b. immediately report to the principal of the school or his designee upon entering the property or arriving at the Pre-K-12 school activity; and
 - c. cooperate with any efforts undertaken by the principal of the school or his designee to discreetly monitor their presence on school property or at the Pre-K-12 school activity.

For the purposes of this subsection, a Pre-K-12 school activity is an activity sponsored by a school in which students in grades Pre-K-12 are the primary intended participants or for whom students in grades Pre-K-12 are the primary intended audience including, but not limited to, school instructional time, after school care, after school tutoring, athletic events, field trips, school plays, or assemblies.

Adult sex offenders have a duty to comply with this policy, and it shall not be construed as imposing an affirmative duty of any kind on the school principal, his

[Reference: Ala. Code § 15-20A-17]

than two (2) inches, archery equipment, devices designed to expel projectiles at a high rate of speed, any device so classified under state or federal law, and any device either used or intended to be used in such manner as to inflict bodily harm, provided that the terms “deadly weapon” and “dangerous instruments” will exclude, to the extent permitted by law, devices and equipment that are used for the purpose of and in connection with school or Board sanctioned educational, team, or competitive activities.

- a. *Penalties for Violations* – In addition to any criminal penalties that may be imposed, the following penalties will be imposed for unauthorized possession of deadly weapons or dangerous instruments:
 1. *Students* – Students will be disciplined in accordance with the Board’s Code of Student Conduct.
 2. *Employees* – Employees will be subject to adverse personnel action, which may include termination.
 3. *Other Persons* – Other persons may be denied re-entry to school property.
- b. *Notification of Law Enforcement* – The appropriate law enforcement authority, which may include the city police, county sheriff, and the local district attorney, will be notified by the principal of violations of this policy.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-1-24.1 (1975); Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02(1)(b)]

4.2.3 Illegal Drugs and Alcohol – The use, possession, distribution, and sale of alcohol and the illegal use, possession, distribution, and sale of drugs in a school building, on school grounds, on Board property, on school buses, or at school-sponsored functions is prohibited.

- a. *Penalties for Violations* – In addition to any criminal penalties that may be imposed, the following penalties will be imposed for unauthorized possession of illegal drugs or alcohol:
 1. *Students* – Students will be disciplined in accordance with the Board’s Code of Student Conduct.
 2. *Employees* – Employees will be subject to adverse personnel action, which may include termination.
 3. *Other Persons* – Other persons may be denied re-entry to school property.
- b. *Notification of Law Enforcement* – The appropriate law enforcement authority, which may include the city police, county sheriff, and the local

district attorney, will be notified by the principal of violations of this policy.

- 4.2.4 Tobacco – The use of tobacco products and the illegal possession, distribution, and sale of tobacco products on school property is prohibited. These prohibitions also apply to electronic cigarettes, vape pens, hookah pens, e-hookahs, vape pipes and any similar type of device designed to deliver nicotine, flavor, and other chemicals via inhalation.

a. *Penalties for Violation*

1. Students – Students who violate the tobacco prohibition will be disciplined in accordance with the Board's Code of Student Conduct.
2. Employees – Employees who violate the tobacco prohibition will be subject to adverse personnel action, which may include termination.
3. Other Persons – Other persons who violate the tobacco prohibition may be denied re-entry to school property.

b. *Parental Notification* – Parents and guardians may be notified of actual or suspected violations of the tobacco prohibition whether or not the student is charged with a violation of Board policy, which includes the Code of Student Conduct.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-1-24.1 (1975); Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02(1)(b)]

- 4.2.5 Searches – Law enforcement agencies are permitted to make periodic visits to all schools to detect the presence of illegal drugs or weapons and may use any lawful means at their disposal to detect the presence of such substances. The visits will be unannounced to anyone except the Superintendent and principal.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-1-24.1 (1975); Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02(1)(b)]

- 4.2.6 Drug and Alcohol-Free Environment – All students, employees, volunteers, parents, visitors, and other persons are prohibited from possessing, using, consuming, manufacturing, or distributing illegal controlled substances and alcohol while on Board property or while attending any Board sponsored or sanctioned event, program, activity, or function. Persons who are intoxicated or impaired by the use, consumption, or ingestion of any illegal controlled substance or alcohol are not permitted to be on school property, or to attend or participate in any Board sponsored or sanctioned event, program, activity, or function.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-1-24.1, 25-5-330 (1975)]

- 4.2.7 Adoption of Statutory Penalties and Consequences – Persons who violate the Board's prohibition of firearms, weapons, illegal drugs, or alcohol will be subject

to all notification, referral, suspension, placement, re-admission, and other provisions set forth in ALA. CODE §16-1-24.1 and 24.3 (1975).

4.3 Accreditation

The Board will implement and adhere to such accreditation policies, principles, standards, and procedures as may be established or required by AdvancED as a condition to receiving or maintaining accreditation.

4.4 Use of Board Property

4.4.1 Equipment, Supplies, Materials, Vehicles – Equipment, supplies, materials, vehicles, and other movable or consumable property owned by or under lease to the Board may not be used by or made available to persons or entities for private or personal use, benefit, or consumption, or for any non-Board related use or purpose. Such property may not be removed from Board premises except as necessary to serve a school or Board-related function or purpose, and with the knowledge and approval of the appropriate supervisor, administrator, or the Superintendent.

4.4.2 Use of Board Facilities – Schools and other Board owned or controlled facilities may be made available for use by sanctioned or generally recognized school support organizations if the use of the facility will not disrupt school operations or be inconsistent with the purpose and mission of the school system, and if adequate advance provision is made for security, supervision, maintenance, damage prevention, post-event clean-up, liability insurance, and other risk management measures appropriate to the proposed use.

Use of Board facilities for non-school organizations may be approved if the foregoing conditions are satisfied and a rental contract (or the equivalent thereof) that includes a reasonable fee or rental charge and other appropriate terms is signed by the organization for each day of use. The school principal retains discretion to deny use of school facilities when such denial is in the best interest of the school system and/or community. Rental fee will be \$100.00 per day for individual groups or organizations. Any charitable event fee or community affiliated recreational league event fee will be at the Superintendent's discretion.

4.5 Complaints and Grievances

4.5.1 General Complaints (Grievances) – Subject to the limitations set forth below and elsewhere in this policy manual, any employee or member of the public may present to the Board a concern, complaint, grievance, or request for corrective action regarding any aspect of school system operations. Before requesting corrective action or relief from the Superintendent or the Board, persons with such complaints, grievances, or requests should present them for resolution to the employee, supervisor, or administrator at the lowest administrative level who has the authority and ability to address the problem or to implement the requested action. The Superintendent is authorized to develop specific procedures that will

provide for fair consideration and orderly review of complaints and grievances. Such procedures may not unreasonably burden or delay the presentation or processing of such matters.

4.5.2 Limitations Regarding Availability and Application of General

Complaint/Grievance Policy – The general complaints and grievances policy is not applicable to factual or legal circumstances that are governed by a separate, specific complaint policy or process (e.g., sexual harassment; personnel matters under the Students First Act; “due process” hearings provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). In such instances, the specific statutory, regulatory, or policy-based process is the applicable procedure.

The general complaint and grievance procedures that are authorized under the terms of this policy may not be invoked for the purpose of challenging or seeking review or reconsideration of adverse personnel decisions that have received final Board approval. A grievance may be based on an alleged misapplication of Board policies, regulations, or procedures, but may not be used to challenge the Board’s exercise of its discretion to adopt, approve, modify, or repeal a policy, regulation, or procedure or on its failure to exercise such discretion (e.g., adoption of a school calendar, compensation policies, etc.).

4.5.3 Student Complaints and Grievances – Complaints, grievances, and requests for corrective action may be brought to the attention of the Board by or on behalf of students with respect to academic, athletic, extracurricular, or other non-disciplinary matters, issues, and concerns only after reasonable efforts to resolve the matter at the school and administrative levels have been exhausted. The Superintendent is authorized to develop specific procedures that will provide for fair consideration and orderly review of such complaints and grievances. Such procedures will not unreasonably burden or delay the presentation or processing of the complaint or grievance and will be subject to review and approval by the Board. Administrative judgments concerning academic or curricular matters or participation in extracurricular activities may be set aside by the Board only upon a showing that the action or decision in question is arbitrary and capricious, fundamentally unfair, or that it violates Board policy or the student’s legal rights.

4.5.4 Student Disciplinary Matters – The Board may consider appeals of student disciplinary decisions or actions in accordance with standards and procedures specified in the Code of Student Conduct.

4.5.5 Public Complaints – Nothing in this policy shall be construed to deny any member of the public the right to petition the Board for consideration or action regarding any matter of public concern falling within the statutory jurisdiction of the Board, provided that the person can demonstrate that he or she is impacted by the alleged violation to a greater extent than the impact on the public at large.

4.5.6 Americans with Disabilities Act Complaint Procedure -

- a. *Complaint Criteria* – Persons who believe that they have been discriminated against on the basis of disability in the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits covered by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act may file a written complaint with the ADA Coordinator.
- b. *Complaint Form* – The complaint should be in writing and contain information about the alleged discrimination including the name, address, phone number of complaining party and location, date, and description of the problem. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews or a tape recording of the complaint, will be made available for persons with disabilities upon request.
- c. *Complaint Process* – The complaint should be submitted to the ADA Coordinator as soon as possible, but no later than thirty (30) days after the alleged violation. The ADA Coordinator will meet with the complaining party to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within fifteen (15) calendar days of the meeting, the ADA Coordinator will respond in writing, and where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complaining party, such as large print, Braille, or audio tape. The response will explain the position of the Board and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint.
- d. *Appeal Procedure* – If the response by the ADA Coordinator does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complaining party may appeal the decision within fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt of the response to the Superintendent. Within fifteen (15) calendar days, the Superintendent will respond in writing, and where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, with a final resolution of the complaint.
- e. *Records Retention* – All written complaints received by the ADA Coordinator, appeals to the Superintendent, and records relating thereto will be retained by the Board for at least three (3) years.
- f. *Additional Procedures Authorized* – The Superintendent is authorized to develop such procedures as are necessary to implement this policy.

[Reference: 42 U.S.C.A. §12131, *et seq.*]

4.6 ***Risk Management***

The Board may obtain such liability and other forms of insurance or enter into such risk management agreements, pools, cooperatives, and like arrangements, agreements, or undertakings as it deems necessary and appropriate to meet legal requirements or to protect the Board, its employees, or its property from risk of loss.

4.7 *Emergency Closing of Schools*

- 4.7.1 Authority of Superintendent to Close Schools – The Superintendent is authorized to close schools if such action is warranted by weather conditions or other circumstances that pose a risk to the safety and welfare of students and employees, or that render meaningful instruction impossible (e.g., loss of power or other utility services).
- 4.7.2 Make-Up Dates – To the extent not provided for in the school calendar, any days lost by reasons of an emergency closing will be made up and a revised school calendar approved, if necessary, to reflect any extension or adjustment of the school year required by such action, unless approval to waive the days is obtained in accordance with state law.

4.8 *Internet Safety and Use of Technology*

Information from electronic sources opens unlimited resources. The Jackson County School District will provide access to resources available via the Internet with the understanding that faculty, staff, and students will access and use information that is appropriate for their various curricula. As required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, Jackson County School District has taken precautions to restrict access to inappropriate materials or sites as follows:

- Internet access for all users is filtered through one central point by URL and IP address.
- Internet searches are filtered by keyword.
- The Jackson County School District has the authority to add or remove URLs and IP addresses from the filtered list.
- Internet usage is monitored for unauthorized access including hacking or other unlawful activities
- The written permission of parents or guardians is required before a student may gain access to the Internet. Permission is not transferable, and therefore, may not be shared.
- Students will be taught appropriate online behavior including interacting appropriately with other individuals on social networking websites, chat rooms, and cyber bullying awareness and response.

Internet access is a privilege, not a right. All Internet users are expected to act in a considerate and responsible manner. In the event that any user determines that any inappropriate material can be accessed via the Jackson County School District internet connection, it is that user's responsibility to immediately report the URL to the school

[Reference: 47 U.S.C. §254(h) and (l)]

Any unauthorized access, use, transfer, or distribution of Board data by any employee, student, or any other individual may result in disciplinary action (up to and including termination for employees) and other legal action.

- a. Employees may not appropriate Board property or resources for use in political campaigns, and may not engage in partisan political activities (including but not limited to the distribution of campaign material or literature) during regular school or duty hours or at activities at which the employee is on duty or assigned official responsibilities;
- b. Employees may not represent their political beliefs or positions on political matters to be those of the Board or other Board officials, or to falsely assert or imply that their political activities or positions are endorsed by or undertaken in the name of the Board or other Board officials;
- c. Candidates and representatives of candidates for political office may not be invited or allowed to address student groups except when such candidates are participating in a forum or like format that is designed to provide all candidates the opportunity to participate. Such forums may be conducted only for appropriate age groups, and with the advance approval of the school principal and the Superintendent; and
- d. Political signs may not be placed on schools or school board property. Campaign literature and other material may not be distributed on Board property during the regular school or work day, and may not be distributed at school or Board sponsored events or activities in a manner that impedes the normal and safe

movement of pedestrian or vehicular traffic, that creates any other safety hazard or risk, or that disturbs or disrupts the function, activity, or event.

- e. Any activity in violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

4.11 *Automatic External Defibrillator (AED)*

The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures regarding the use of AEDs.

V. Personnel

5.1 *Employee Qualifications and Duties*

5.1.1 General Requirements – Employees have a duty to perform their jobs responsibly and in a conscientious manner. In addition to any specific job requirements set forth in job descriptions or elsewhere, employees are expected to meet the following general performance and service standards:

- a. Employees are required to be punctual and to attend work regularly.
- b. Employees are required to perform the duties and responsibilities that are assigned to them by the Board, the Superintendent, or their supervisor(s). Such duties and assignments may extend beyond or outside the instructional day and may include off-campus functions, events, and activities.
- c. Employees are expected to treat all students, co-employees, visitors, and guests of the Board with respect. Employees are expected to demonstrate moderation, restraint, and civility in their dealings with others and, in general, to serve as appropriate role models for students in their behavior and demeanor.
- d. Employees are required to obey all laws, ordinances, Board policies, and supervisory directives, and are expected to follow the Alabama Educator Code of Ethics and other pertinent authority while carrying out duties for the Board, but employees are not required to comply with unethical or illegal directives.
- e. Employees whose duties include the instruction or supervision of students must provide effective supervision, discipline, organization, and instruction of the students.
- f. Employees must complete and submit required reports accurately and in a timely fashion.
- g. Employees must respect, protect, and exercise due care in the handling, use, and operation of Board property and equipment.
- h. Employees shall at all times maintain an appropriate and professional relationship with students and shall not engage in conduct (including communication of any kind) that constitutes, solicits, or suggests sexual, romantic, or inappropriately familiar interaction with a student.
- i. *Employee Attire* – Employees are required to report to work or to school functions in attire that is appropriate to their position and the nature of the function and that is in keeping with generally accepted standards of

decorum and professionalism. Service and other employees who are issued uniforms shall wear uniforms when required.

- j. Employees shall promptly disclose to the Board any fact that would disqualify them from employment or that renders them unable to perform their essential job functions. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action.

5.1.2 Special Requirements -

- a. *Work Schedules (Teachers)* – Teachers are required to report to work a minimum of fifteen (15) minutes prior to the beginning of the official school day for students and remain on campus for fifteen (15) minutes after the dismissal of students. Teachers will be provided a minimum of thirty (30) minutes free of instructional and supervisory responsibilities each teaching day.

Assignments and duties may extend beyond the teaching day and may include off-campus functions, events, and activities; faculty meetings; conferences and meetings with parents; supervision of student arrival and departure; and preparation for the following instructional day.

- b. *Work Schedules (All Other Personnel)* – The Superintendent is authorized to establish work schedules, including minimum work times, in keeping with job description and the salary schedule for all other personnel.
- c. *Professional Certification* – In addition to requirements established by the State Board of Education and the pertinent job description, professional employees must hold a degree from an accredited college or university and hold a current, valid, and properly endorsed Alabama Teacher's Certificate, which will be maintained in the Superintendent's office. A teacher who has completed the certification process but has not received the certificate may be employed on tentative or temporary compensation pending verification of certification from the State Department of Education. Upon receipt of such verification, appropriate adjustments will be made to the teacher's salary. If a teacher earns a higher certificate that merits increased compensation under the approved salary schedule, any salary increase will become effective upon the Board receiving documentation of the new certification from the State Department of Education.
- d. *Substitute Teachers* – Substitute teachers must, at a minimum, possess a high school diploma and valid and current Alabama Substitute Teacher's Certificate or Alabama Teacher's Certificate.
- e. *Dual Employment* – When an employee is hired to perform the functions of two or more distinct positions within the school's daily operations (e.g., teacher and athletic coach), and when maintenance of that dual

5.2 Hiring

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some or all of the functions of the disqualified official with respect to the decision or action in question, the surrogate official shall be deemed objective, neutral or impartial if he or she:

1. Is not related by blood or marriage to the disqualified official or the person whose employment status is at issue, or of any applicant in a multi-member field of persons under consideration for employment or advancement;
2. Does not work under the direct or indirect supervision of the disqualified official, of any person who selects the surrogate official, of any person whose employment status could be affected by the action or decision at issue;
3. Has no personal or financial connection to the disqualified official, to any person whose employment status could be affected by the action or decision at issue, to any other person involved or affected by the action or decision at issue in a way that would call into question the surrogate official's objectivity, neutrality, or impartiality; and
4. By education, training, and experience has a sufficient understanding of the employment qualifications and other factors and considerations that bear upon the action or decision at issue to make an informed report and recommendation to the Board.

After considering any report or recommendation that may be made by the surrogate official, the Board may approve such recommendation or remand the matter in question for a different recommendation.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-22-15.1]

5.3 *Non-Teaching Supplemental Duties*

Compensation in the form of supplements may be paid for noninstructional supplemental duties in accordance with rates specified or established for such duties in the Board's official salary schedule. Such duties include coaching and sponsorship of athletic support organizations as well as scholastic support activities. Such supplemental duties are considered additional nonteaching assignments to be made and approved on an annual basis or otherwise as the needs of the school require. Such supplemental duties are not considered to be a part of a teaching contract or appointment, and no tenure, continuing service status, non-probationary status, or contractual right to continued employment or compensation for such supplemental assignment will be recognized or implied in the absence of a separate written contract of employment providing for such rights.

5.4 *Professional Development*

The Superintendent will develop and implement an ongoing program of professional training and development that is designed to enhance the competencies of professional

and support staff. Employee attendance and participation in such training institutes, workshops, seminars, and programs may be made mandatory by the Superintendent. The unexcused failure of an employee to attend or participate in such professional development activities may constitute grounds for termination of employment or other disciplinary action.

5.5 *Employee Conflicts of Interest*

Employees may not use their offices or positions for personal gain and must adhere to applicable provisions of the Alabama Ethics Law. Employees may only engage in outside employment under the following terms and conditions:

- a. Employees will not engage in outside business activities or render any service for another employer during such time as duties and responsibilities have been assigned by the Board;
- b. Employees will not accept outside employment that would interfere with or impair the ability of the employee to perform duties as a Board employee effectively;
- c. Employees may not accept work that could compromise the employee's independent judgment in the exercise of duties for the Board;
- d. Employees may not use or disclose confidential information acquired through Board employment for their personal gain or for the benefit of a third party.

5.6 *Employee Gifts*

Employees may accept gifts from students or other members of the public if the gifts are in accordance with the Alabama Ethics law and any other applicable law, provided that a single gift from an individual should not exceed twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) and that the total monetary value of the gifts from a person for that year should not exceed fifty dollars (\$50.00).

The Board allows employees to accept gifts or gift cards purchased from pooled donations within a class, team, or other school group or organization for the employee's personal use provided that the amount that each person gives should not exceed the above amounts.

Nothing in this policy should be construed to create restrictions on gifts beyond those that are specifically provided for by law or to allow conduct specifically prohibited by law. Any person with a question about the application of the Ethics law to a particular gift should contact the Ethics Commission for clarification.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §36-25-1, *et seq.*; Alabama Ethics Opinion 2011-12 & 2016-34]

5.7 *Employee Evaluations*

- 5.7.1 Certified Personnel – Certified employees (other than contract principals) will be evaluated in accordance with an evaluation program approved for use by the Alabama State Board of Education. Contract principals will be evaluated in accordance with rules, regulations, and requirements promulgated by the State Department of Education or as may otherwise be permitted by law.
- 5.7.2 Non-Certified Personnel – Non-certified personnel will be evaluated annually.
- 5.7.3 Use of Evaluations in Connection with Employment Decisions – Unless prohibited by law (including applicable regulations) or the terms of the evaluation instrument, employment evaluations may be considered in making employment decisions, together with such other information and considerations as may reasonably bear upon the wisdom, necessity, or advisability of the employment decision. However, employment evaluations are intended to enhance the overall quality of the school system's instructional program and are not intended to confer, constitute, or give rise to any individual right, entitlement, or enforceable expectation of continued employment or advancement. Accordingly, except as may be specifically provided otherwise in state law applicable to "contract principals," employees do not acquire any employment right or right of legal action based on any actual or alleged failure on the part of the Board or the evaluator to follow specific evaluation policies, regulations, or procedures.
- 5.7.4 Special Evaluation Situations – The Superintendent, the Chief School Financial Officer, and other employees who serve in positions of special trust or sensitivity may be evaluated by such means as may be permitted by law or applicable regulation or as agreed to in an employment contract
- 5.7.5 Exempt Personnel – Except when required by law or contract, temporary, substitute, and occasional employees, or employees appointed to supplemental positions (e.g., coaches, extracurricular activity sponsors) will not be formally evaluated in those roles.

5.8 *Personnel Records*

- 5.8.1 Content of Personnel Files – A central personnel file will be maintained for all regular employees. The personnel file may contain information regarding the employee's current assignment, payroll status, and work history, including but not limited to job qualifications, certification, licenses, employment contract(s), evaluation data, disciplinary information, and such other documents, written materials, and data as may be reasonably deemed necessary and appropriate by the Board for sound and efficient personnel administration. Anonymous material and other matters that are prohibited by law, regulation, or Board policy from being maintained in personnel files should not be included therein. Employees may reasonably supplement or respond in writing to any material contained in the personnel file with which they disagree and such responses will also be included in the personnel file.

- 5.8.2 Alternate Data Storage – Personnel file data may be stored or maintained electronically or digitally.
- 5.8.3 Confidentiality – In general, the contents of an employee’s personnel file will be deemed confidential except for documents, information, and materials that are matters of public information or public record under applicable state or federal law.
- 5.8.4 Access to Personnel Files – Board members, the Superintendent, Board administrators (including principals), employees with human resources responsibilities, and other persons whose duties reasonably require access to personnel files are authorized to view, and use the contents of personnel files for purposes that are required by or in keeping with their official duties on behalf of the Board.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-22-14]

5.9 *Employee Leave*

- 5.9.1 Work Attendance an Essential Job Function – Punctual, regular attendance is an essential job function of every job and position, and employees are expected to report to work when scheduled to work and to remain at work each working day.
- 5.9.2 Absences – Except as otherwise authorized under Board policy, employees may be absent from work only in the following circumstances:
- a. Illness, injury or other qualifying reason for sick leave or on-the-job injury leave under state law or the Family Medical Leave Act;
 - b. Personal leave;
 - c. Vacation leave;
 - d. Professional leave;
 - e. Military leave;
 - f. Court leave;
 - g. Other unpaid leave that is specifically approved by the Board upon a showing of substantial hardship or extraordinary circumstances.

Employees who know in advance that they will be absent from work must notify their immediate Supervisor of the expected absence in accordance with procedures specified by the Superintendent or the Board. In the event of an emergency or incapacity that makes advance notice impractical, employees must notify the Board of their absence as early as possible. Except as otherwise provided or permitted, an employee who is absent from work without approved leave will be considered absent without leave in violation of Board policy and

subject to appropriate disciplinary measures. Employees who are approved for paid leave or absences will be paid at the regular daily rate of pay; however, a day of paid leave or absence will not be counted as a day worked for the purposes of computing overtime under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Pay will be reduced on a *pro rata* basis for leaves or absences not covered by sick, vacation, personal, or other appropriate form of paid leave. The continuation of benefits during an approved absence is subject to the provisions of the particular benefit policy or plan.

5.9.3 Paid Sick Leave -

- a. *Persons Eligible for Paid Sick Leave* – All regular full-time employees are eligible for paid sick leave.
- b. *Earning and Accumulation of Paid Sick Leave* – All eligible employees earn sick leave days at the rate provided for in state law. Eligible employees may accumulate sick leave as provided by state law.
- c. *Use of Sick Leave* – Eligible employees may only use paid sick leave for absences caused by the following:
 - 1. Personal illness;
 - 2. Incapacitating personal injury;
 - 3. Attendance upon an ill member of the employee's immediate family, defined as a spouse, parent, child, sibling or any person with a close personal tie;
 - 4. Death of a family member, including a spouse, parent, child, sibling, mother or father-in-law, son or daughter-in-law, brother or sister-in-law, nephew or niece, grandparent, grandchild, aunt or uncle;
 - 5. Death or care of an individual with whom unusually strong personal ties exist because of a relationship other than those listed above.
- d. *Certification* – If the employee's principal or department head has probable cause to believe that an employee has abused or misused sick leave, a physician's statement verifying the existence and nature of the illness or medical condition may be required by the Board. Abuse of sick leave may subject the employee to disciplinary action.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-1-18.1 (1975)]

- #### 5.9.4 On-The-Job Injury Leave – On-the-job injury includes an accident or injury to an employee that occurs in the course of performing job duties for the Board or when

the employee is directed or requested by the employer to be on the property of employer and which prevents the employee from working or returning to the job. Employees who are accidentally injured on the job may be approved for paid “on-the-job injury” leave without using sick days, provided that:

- a. The injured employee submits written medical certification from the attending licensed physician stating that the employee was injured and cannot return to work due to a specified injury, if there is a reasonable expectation that the employee will return to work and, if so, the expected date of that return. The Board may require a second opinion from a Board specified physician, at its expense.
- b. The employee submits a signed written account of the accident attested by a principal or department head within twenty-four (24) hours after the injury occurred. If the injured employee is not able to notify the Board, another person reasonably knowledgeable about the employee’s condition and circumstances leading to the injury may provide the required notification.

Upon a determination that the employee has been injured on the job and cannot return to work, the Board may maintain the employee’s salary and benefits for the period of incapacity caused by the injury, not to exceed ninety (90) days. An employee who is injured on the job may file a request for unreimbursed medical expenses and costs with the State Board of Adjustment. The Board will provide such reasonable assistance to the employee in filing the Board of Adjustment claim as is required by law, and will have no responsibility or liability for processing the claim or directly reimbursing the employee any unreimbursed medical expenses and costs. On-the-job injury leave will be administered in accordance with and subject to the requirements and limitations imposed by state law regarding such leave.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-1-18.1 (1975)]

- 5.9.5 Personal Leave – All regular, full time employees are eligible for two (2) state-funded, non-cumulative personal leave days each scholastic year without loss of pay. All employees are eligible for three additional, locally-funded days for which the employee will be charged an amount equal to the average daily rate of pay for a substitute for the employee’s position.

Personal leave must be requested in accordance with such procedures as may be established by the Superintendent. Personal leave should not be taken immediately before or after a school holiday or in the first or last ten days of a school term. Teachers may be compensated for unused personal leave at the end of the school year at the same daily rate of pay used for substitute teachers upon written request. All other unused personal leave days convert to sick leave days at the end of the school year.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-8-26 (1975)]

5.9.6 Vacation -

- a. *Vacation Benefits* – All twelve-month employees shall be entitled to earn twelve (12) days per year vacation leave. This leave shall be accrued at 1 day per calendar month. In addition, if school is in session on an official state holiday, twelve-month employees shall accrue a day of vacation for that day.
- b. *Accrual and Accumulation of Vacation Time* – The period for the purpose of accumulating vacation days shall be from August 1 to July 31. The maximum number of days accumulated on July 31 shall not exceed twenty (20) days. Any accrued but unused vacation days in excess of twenty (20) days will be forfeited after the close of business on July 31 of each year.

Upon a twelve-month employee's separation from employment or upon an employee's transfer out of a twelve-month position into a position of less than twelve months, such employees shall be entitled to compensation for unused vacation days up to a maximum of twenty (20) days.

Compensation for each unused vacation day shall be the employee's daily rate of pay.

- c. *Scheduling* – Vacations must be scheduled with the knowledge and approval of the employee's department head. Any twelve-month employee must have prior Superintendent approval for more than five (5) consecutive vacation/personal days.

5.9.7 Professional Leave – The Superintendent is authorized to grant professional leave with pay to Board employees to engage in educational activities which, in the judgment of the Superintendent, serve the needs and interests of the school system. The number of days approved for such leave will be at the discretion of the Superintendent.

5.9.8 Military Leave – Military leave is available to all eligible employees in accordance with state and federal law.

5.9.9 Court Leave – Permanent and full-time employees are entitled to regular compensation while performing jury duty (ALA. CODE §12-16-8) or when the employee is summoned for school-related purposes under subpoena or other legal requirement to testify at trial in a court of law or in an administrative proceeding constituted under the statutory authority of the agency conducting the proceedings. Paid leave is not authorized for employees to meet with attorneys, to attend depositions, or to otherwise prepare for legal proceedings unless the presence of the employee is requested or required by the Board.

5.10 Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

5.10.1 Eligible Employees – The FMLA is applicable to all persons who have been employed for at least twelve (12) months and have worked a minimum of 1,250 hours during that twelve (12) month period.

5.10.2 Medical Leave Provided by the Act – Under the FMLA, eligible employees are entitled to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid leave during any twelve (12) month period for one or more of the following reasons:

- a. The birth and first year care of a newborn child;
- b. The placement of a foster child or adoption;
- c. The care of an immediate family member, defined as a spouse, child or parent, with a serious health condition;
- d. The taking of medical leave because of the employee's own serious health condition.

For the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child, the entitlement to leave for child care expires at the end of the twelve (12) month period beginning on the date of birth, adoption, or placement. Leave associated with the illness of a child will only be provided if the child is under eighteen (18) years of age or is incapable of self care due to physical or mental disability.

5.10.3 Serious Health Conditions – The term “serious health condition” means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves the following:

- a. Any period of incapacity in connection with or following inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility.
- b. Continuing treatment by a health-care provider, to include any period of incapacity due to:
 1. A health condition, including treatment and recovery, lasting more than three (3) consecutive days, and any subsequent treatment or period of incapacity relating to the same condition;
 2. Pregnancy or prenatal care;
 3. A chronic, serious health condition which continues over an extended period of time, requires periodic visits to a health care provider, and may involve episodes of incapacity (e.g., asthma and diabetes);

4. A permanent or long-term condition for which treatment may not be effective (e.g. Alzheimer's, severe stroke) and for which supervision of a health-care provider is required;
5. Multiple treatments for restorative surgery or for a condition which would likely result in a period of incapacity of more than three (3) days if not treated.

5.10.4 Military Family Leave Provided by the Act -

- a. *Qualifying Exigency Leave* – Under the FMLA, an eligible employee with a spouse, child, or parent on active duty or call to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation may utilize the twelve (12) week medical leave entitlement to address qualifying exigencies resulting from that service.
- b. *Military Caregiver Leave* – An eligible employee, who is the spouse, child, parent, or next of kin of a covered service member, is entitled to take up to twenty-six (26) weeks (including any medical leave provided by the Act) of unpaid leave during any twelve (12) month period (beginning the first day of the leave) to care for an individual covered service member with a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty while on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform the duties of the member's office, grade, rank, or rating. A covered service member is a member of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard and Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty.

5.10.5 Spouse Employed by the Board – Spouses who are both employed by the Board are limited to a combined total of twelve (12) weeks of family leave for the birth and care of a newborn child, for the placement of a child for adoption or foster care, for the care of a parent who has a serious health condition, and for qualifying exigency leave. Spouses who are both employed by the Board are limited to a combined total of twenty-six (26) weeks for military caregiver leave.

5.10.6 Intermittent Leave – An employee may take leave intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule only when medically necessary to care for a spouse, parent, or child or to receive planned medical treatment. Intermittent leave should be scheduled to the extent practicable so as not to unduly disrupt the operations of the Board. Intermittent leave may be further limited for teachers in accordance with federal law.

5.10.7 Notice – Employees seeking leave under the FMLA must provide thirty (30) days advance notice of the need to take leave when the need is foreseeable. When the need for leave is unforeseeable, employees should notify their supervisors as soon

as possible. Employees must also provide notice of the need for qualifying exigency leave as soon as practicable.

- 5.10.8 Certification for Medical or Military Caregiver Leave – Every request for FMLA leave based upon the serious health condition of the employee or employee's spouse, children, or parents, or leave as a military caregiver must be supported by medical certification issued by the appropriate health care provider on forms provided by the Board.

For leave based on a serious health condition of the employee or employee's spouse, child, or parent, the Board reserves the right to obtain a second opinion from an independent health-care provider designated by the Board. If the opinion received by the employee and the second opinion conflict, the Board and the employee must agree on a third provider to issue a binding opinion. Both the second and third opinions (if necessary) will be at the expense of the Board.

- 5.10.9 Certification for Qualifying Exigency Leave – Certification will be required by the Board for requests for qualifying exigency leave. Certification must be timely submitted on forms available from the Board. For the first such request, certification may include a copy of the military service member's duty orders or other military documentation.
- 5.10.10 Return to Work – The Board may require an employee who has taken leave due to the employee's own serious medical condition to provide the Board with a healthcare provider's certification in order to return to work. Any employee who takes leave under these provisions will be entitled to be restored to the original position held when the leave commenced or to an equivalent position with equivalent benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment.
- 5.10.11 Maintenance of Benefits – Benefits accrued by the employee before leave is taken are not lost when approved FMLA leave is taken. Employees who are on approved FMLA leave will remain eligible to participate in benefit programs in which the employee was enrolled at the time of the leave, provided that the employee will continue to be responsible for payment of employee's portion of any cost, premium, or like payment that is required to maintain eligibility for the coverage or benefit. An employee that does not return to work after FMLA leave, will be required to reimburse the Board for the cost of benefits coverage extended to the employee during the leave, unless the reason for the employee's failure to return to work is (i) a continuing serious health condition suffered by either the employee or a family member, or (ii) other circumstances beyond the employee's control.
- 5.10.12 Instructional Employees – Medical leave taken by eligible instructional employees is subject to further limitations and provisions established by the FMLA.

5.11 *Sick Leave Bank*

A “Sick Leave Bank” plan for full-time certified and classified employees is hereby established in accordance with applicable provisions of state law. A Sick Leave Bank Committee will be established to oversee the operations of the Sick Leave Bank in accordance with state law and the following provisions:

- a. *Sick Leave Bank Committee* – The Sick Leave Bank Committee will be composed of one member representing the Board and four members representing participating members of the sick leave bank.

Board Representative – The Member representing the Board will be appointed by the Superintendent, subject to Board approval.

Participant Representatives – The participant representatives will be selected by the sick leave bank members.

- b. *Procedures for Selecting Employee Representatives on Committee*

- 1. *Nomination* – Before each election of participant representatives, the Board will hold an open nomination period. Any employee who is eligible to participate in the sick leave bank may be nominated for one of the participant representative positions. Nominations must be written and must be received in the Payroll Department by the deadline specified in a notice to be provided by the Superintendent or his designee through Board publications and other means of communication that are generally used for such purposes.

- 2. *Voting* – Each eligible nominee will be placed on the Sick Leave Bank Committee ballot. Voting will take place by ballot at Board facilities at the time specified or as may otherwise be provided by the Board. Supervision of voting will be by local facility personnel. Voting members will be required to verify their ballot by signing the Board’s voter record. Votes will be forwarded to the Payroll Department for final tabulation. The four candidates receiving the highest number of votes will serve as participant representatives on the Sick Leave Bank Committee.

- c. *Term of Committee Members* – Sick Leave Bank Committee members will serve for a term of one year and may not serve for more than five years.
- d. *Chairman of the Sick Leave Bank Committee* – The Sick Leave Bank Committee will elect a chairman from among its representatives at its first annual meeting. The chairman will be responsible for recording organizational minutes, for conducting meetings, and for organizing meetings as necessary.

- e. *Meetings* – The Sick Leave Bank Committee will meet at least annually following each enrollment period. The Committee will also meet as necessary in its discretion.
- f. *Sick Leave Bank Committee Duties* – The Sick Leave Bank Committee will develop proposed rules and regulations for the Sick Leave Bank, to be submitted to participating members for approval. At a minimum, said rules and regulations must include those terms and provisions that are required by statute. The Committee has the authority to review both participation in the Bank and requests for leave to ensure compliance with state law, Board policy, and such rules and regulations as may be adopted by the Sick Leave Bank Committee.
- g. *Employee Participation* – Participation in the Sick Leave Bank is voluntary and open to all full-time employees of the Board. However, employee participation is subject to such rules and regulations regarding enrollment procedures, deposits, withdrawals, and participation as may be developed by the Committee.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-22-9 (1975)]

5.12 *Administrative Leave*

The Superintendent is authorized to place an employee on administrative leave upon a determination that the best interests of the school system would be served by such action. Administrative leave relieves the employee of regular work responsibilities pending resolution of the matters or circumstances that gave rise to the leave. Administrative leave is not disciplinary in nature or purpose and does not affect the employee's compensation, benefits, tenure, or nonprobationary status. Administrative leave may be accompanied by such additional restrictions or conditions as may reasonably be imposed by the Superintendent under the circumstances (e.g., limitation on access to school property). The status of employees who are on administrative leave will be reviewed and reported to the Board periodically or as otherwise may be directed by the Board.

5.13 *Equal Employment Opportunity*

5.13.1 Unlawful Discrimination Prohibited – The Board is an equal opportunity employer. Personnel actions and decisions will be made without regard to factors or considerations prohibited by federal or state law (as such laws may from time to time be amended), including but not limited to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, and genetics.

5.13.2 Implementing Regulations Authorized – The Superintendent is authorized and directed to implement such rules, regulations, procedures, and directives as necessary and appropriate to implement and enforce this policy and any law prohibiting discrimination in the workplace, including the designation of one or more complaint/grievance investigators, officials, or coordinators, the development of complaint or grievance procedures for responding to allegations

of unlawful discrimination, the provision of training or dissemination of instructional materials and advisories to appropriate staff members, and the administration of corrective or remedial action in response to violations of the law and of this policy.

5.14 *Sexual Harassment*

The Board strictly prohibits unlawful discrimination in all of its programs, offices, departments and facilities. Sexual harassment, as defined by law, is a form of unlawful discrimination and will not be tolerated from employees or other persons associated with the Board.

5.14.1 Definition of Sexual Harassment – Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature when:

- a. Submission to such conduct or communication is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, of employment or other employment benefits provided by the Board;
- b. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions affecting the individual's employment, or other benefits provided by the Board; or
- c. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

5.14.2 Examples of Prohibited Conduct – The following are examples of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment, depending on individual circumstances:

- a. Verbal harassment or abuse of a sexual nature, including graphic or derogatory comments, the display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, and sexual propositions;
- b. Repeated unwelcome solicitation of sexual activity or sexual contact;
- c. Unwelcome, inappropriate sexual touching;
- d. Demands for sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment or threats with regard to an individual's employment status.

5.14.3 Employee Complaint Resolution Procedure -

- a. *Reporting* – Any employee with reason to believe that he or she has been or is being subjected to any form of sexual harassment should report the matter immediately. Under no circumstances will an employee be required to present the complaint to the person who is the subject of the complaint.
- b. *Informal Complaint* – An employee may choose to submit a sexual harassment complaint to a supervisor for investigation and resolution at the departmental or local level without resorting to formal complaint procedures. If the supervisor is the subject of the complaint, the complaint may be submitted to the Superintendent for resolution. If the complaint is not resolved informally to the satisfaction of the complaining employee, the employee must contact the Superintendent to initiate formal complaint procedures.

5.14.4 Formal Complaint Procedure -

- a. *Persons Responsible for Receiving and Investigating Formal Complaints* – The Superintendent is responsible for receiving and investigating formal complaints regarding sexual harassment. The Assistant Superintendent is an additional official to which formal complaints can be reported. If the Superintendent is unavailable or is the subject of the complaint, the alternate should be contacted regarding the formal complaint.
- b. *Complaint contents* – Formal complaints should be made in writing, signed by the complainant, and fully describe the circumstances surrounding the alleged harassment. Harassment complaints that cannot be made in writing should be memorialized by the Superintendent or designated alternate official.
- c. *Investigation* – The Superintendent will promptly investigate the complaint, review the results of any investigation with legal counsel or other appropriate officials, make any findings that are supported by the investigation, and recommend appropriate action based on these findings. The complainant will be informed of any action that is taken as a result of the investigation.
- d. *Review by the Superintendent and the Board* – A complaining party who is not satisfied with the investigation or resolution of the complaint may request that the Superintendent take additional or different action or present the complaint to the Board for its review and action. In such case, the Board will render a final decision as soon as practicable.

5.14.5 Confidentiality – To the extent possible, reports of sexual harassment will be kept confidential; however, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

5.14.6 Retaliation Prohibited – No retaliation or adverse action may be imposed as a result of a good faith complaint or report of sexual harassment. False accusations that are made in bad faith or for improper reasons may result in disciplinary action.

5.14.7 Penalties for Violation – Any employee who violates the terms of this policy or who impedes or unreasonably refuses to cooperate with a Board investigation regarding allegations of sexual harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

5.15 *Reduction-In-Force*

5.15.1 Definition and Scope –

- a. This policy applies to reductions-in-force that are implemented by “layoffs” as contemplated by Ala. Code §16-1-33 (1975).
- b. A reduction-in-force may be declared by the Board of Education and layoffs approved thereunder if the Board determines that decreased student enrollment or a shortage of revenues requires a reduction in the work force (beyond normal attrition) in order to maintain effective provision of educational services or to meet the Board’s financial, legal, or operational obligations.
- c. A “layoff” within the meaning of this policy is a separation from employment with the Board of Education. However, employees who are laid off under authority of this policy are eligible for recall to employment as conditionally provided in this policy. The term “layoff” does not include or apply to the expiration of temporary, occasional, or “at-will” appointments or to decisions not to renew or extend employment beyond the expiration of annual or other specified terms of appointment.

5.15.2 Criteria for Implementing Layoffs -

- a. The order, priority, rank, or selection of individual employees who are to be laid off under authority of this policy shall be determined on the basis of objective criteria. However, nothing herein shall be deemed or construed to limit or abridge the Board’s legislative discretion to identify areas, departments, groupings, or classifications for reductions (layoffs). (For example, the Board is not required to justify by objective criteria or otherwise a decision to implement layoffs in noninstructional categories or employees before doing so with instructional staff).
- b. The criterion or criteria on which the layoffs are to be based shall be announced or otherwise made known by the Board to employees affected by the layoff no later than the date notice of the layoff is provided to the employees.

- c. "Objective criteria" within the meaning of this policy may include any lawful selection standard (or combination of standards) that is verifiable, calculable, measurable, or otherwise determinable by means or methods other than the personal or subjective judgments or opinions of the person(s) applying the criteria, and that would be expected to produce the same result if applied to the same employees or group of employees by different persons. For purposes of this policy, objective criteria may include, but are not limited to:
- Seniority, longevity, or time in service that will be more specifically described in the notice of layoff that is provided to affected employees
 - Years of experience
 - Degrees, certification, or licensure
 - Job classification
 - Written or otherwise documented performance evaluations that can be fairly, accurately, and objectively compared to other similarly situated employees for the purpose of ordering or ranking, provided that such evaluations predate the RIF announcement or declaration by not less than thirty days

5.15.3 Recall - Employees who have been laid off under the terms of this policy will be given priority in filling positions as enrollment or financial circumstances warrant, provided that:

- a. The nature of the position and qualifications therefore have not materially changed;
- b. The laid-off employee remains properly qualified, licensed, or certified; and
- c. The laid-off employee confirms in writing his or her availability for and interest in re-employment in accordance with any directives that may be contained in or transmitted in conjunction with the notice of layoff.

Circumstances permitting, and to the extent practicable, the selection of employees for recall will be based on the criteria that were applied to the layoffs themselves if there are more employees eligible for recall than positions available to fill. When layoffs occur over a period of time, the Board will take relative length of separation from service into consideration in assigning recall priority, other factors being equal. In no case will any right to be recalled to employment extend beyond one year from the effective date of the employee's layoff. Recalled employees will retain credit for the tenure, years of service, and the pay

and benefit status they held on the effective date of their layoff. No pay, benefits, status, or additional rights will accrue or be credited to the recalled employee for the time he or she has been laid off.

- 5.15.4 Notice - Notification of layoff and recall shall be by United States certified or registered mail, hand delivery, or such other means as are reasonable under the circumstances. Upon receipt of notification of recall, a laid-off employee shall respond affirmatively to the notice of recall in accordance with such specific directions or instructions as may be contained therein. Any laid-off employee who does not so respond or who otherwise declines an offer of reemployment by the Board will be deemed to have waived any right to be recalled under the terms of this policy.

[Reference: Ala. Code §16-1-33 (1975)]

5.16 *Unauthorized Payments*

- 5.16.1 Notification to the Employee – Upon discovery of any unauthorized or erroneous payment or disbursement of funds to an employee, the Board will attempt in good faith to notify the employee of such unauthorized payment and to reach agreement with the employee, if possible, regarding the amount and terms of repayment which may include withholding from future payments. Notification to the employee will consist of a letter mailed or delivered to the employee's last known address. The notice will specify the amount owed, the method by which the amount was calculated, a proposed schedule of repayment, an opportunity for the employee to review or examine any documents or other evidence supporting the claimed overpayment, and an opportunity for the employee to object in person or in writing to the amount or manner of the proposed withholding to provide an alternative plan of repayment. Unless the Board's ability to recover funds in question could be jeopardized by doing so, the Board will arrange a reasonable schedule of repayment so as to avoid undue hardship to the employee.
- 5.16.2 Retention and Recovery Authorized – If no objection to the proposed withholding is received within a reasonable time (to be specified in the notification letter), monies may be retained in the manner and to the extent described in the notification. If the employee objects to the proposed withholding, the Superintendent or his designee may, upon consideration of the objection and information and argument (if any) submitted in connection therewith, take such action as may be warranted under the circumstances and inform the employee in writing of the decision. If the employee is dissatisfied, he may contest the decision through the Board's complaint procedure. Monies may be withheld by the Board pending completion of the grievance process, provided that, should the Board later pay over to the employee monies that have been retained under authority of this policy, such payment(s) will reflect all appropriate deductions and will include accrued interest from the date of withholding at the rate specified by the then-effective rate applicable to interest on unpaid judgments under Alabama law. If, after exhausting reasonable efforts to do so, the Board is unable

to contact the employee in the first instance, the Board may retain or withhold from compensation or other payments due the employee an amount sufficient to satisfy the indebtedness; provided that any such retention or withholding will be subject to review and reconsideration at the request of the employee.

5.16.3 Repayment Required as a Condition of Reemployment – The Board reserves the right to require repayment of any outstanding indebtedness as a condition to reemployment of any former employee.

5.16.4 Procedures Not Exclusive – The provisions, procedures, and method of review specified herein are in addition to those that are otherwise available to the parties under law for the retention or recovery of funds, and for administrative or judicial review thereof.

5.17 *Drug and Alcohol Testing of Safety Sensitive Employees*

5.17.1 Scope – The Board will conduct employee drug and alcohol testing for employees in safety sensitive positions as required by and in accordance with federal law. Testing will be required for all employees holding a commercial drivers' license (CDL) or who occupy a safety sensitive position as designated by the Board ("covered employees").

5.17.2 Prohibited Alcohol and Controlled Substance-Related Conduct – In addition to activities identified in other policies, rules, and procedures, Board employees are prohibited from the following:

- a. Reporting for duty or remaining on duty to perform safety-sensitive functions while having an alcohol concentration in excess of the standard set by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA);
- b. Being on duty or operating a vehicle while possessing alcohol
- c. Consuming alcohol while performing safety-sensitive functions;
- d. Consuming alcohol within eight hours following an accident for which a post-accident alcohol test is required, or prior to undergoing a post-accident alcohol test, whichever comes first;
- e. Refusing to submit to an alcohol or controlled substance test required by post-accident, random, reasonable suspicion, or follow-up testing requirements;
- f. Consuming alcohol or being under the influence of alcohol within eight (8) hours of going on duty, operating, or having physical control of a vehicle;
- g. Reporting for duty or remaining on duty when using any controlled substance, except when instructed by a physician who has advised the

driver and the Board that the substance does not adversely impact the performance of any safety-sensitive duty;

- h. Reporting for duty, remaining on duty, or performing safety sensitive functions with controlled substances in the employee's system.

In the event of a violation of this policy, the employee shall be removed immediately from safety-sensitive duties and shall be subject to such further actions, including disciplinary action up to and including termination, as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent and the Board.

5.17.3 Testing Program Authorized – The Superintendent is directed to establish a testing program whereby all covered employees will be tested for the presence of alcohol and controlled substances. The following tests may be conducted:

- a. *Pre-employment Testing* – Prior to the first time a covered employee performs a safety-sensitive function for the Board, the employee must undergo testing for alcohol and controlled substances.
- b. *Post-accident Testing* — Each surviving driver who is involved in an accident involving a school bus shall submit to testing as soon as practicable following such accident if such driver:
 - (1) Was performing a safety-sensitive function with respect to such vehicle and the accident involved the loss of human life, or
 - (2) Such driver receives a citation within eight (8) hours of the occurrence under state or local law for a moving traffic violation arising from the accident and the accident involved either:
 - (i) Bodily injury to any person who, as a result of the injury, immediately receives medical treatment away from the scene of the accident, or
 - (ii) One or more motor vehicles incurs disabling damage requiring the motor vehicle to be transported away from the scene by a tow truck or other motor vehicle.

Each such driver shall remain readily available for such testing and if he does not remain so readily available, may be deemed to have refused to submit to testing. Transportation supervisors shall provide drivers with necessary post-accident information, procedures and instructions, prior to the driver operating the school bus, so that drivers will be able to comply with the requirements of this policy.

The tests required by this subsection shall be administered as soon as practicable following the accident. If the alcohol test is not administered within two hours following the accident, the supervisor will prepare and

maintain a record stating the reasons. If the alcohol test is not administered within eight hours, and the controlled substances test within 32 hours, the same record shall be made and further efforts to administer such tests shall cease.

- c. *Random Testing* – The Board will conduct unannounced random alcohol and controlled substance testing of its covered employees.
- d. *Reasonable Suspicion Testing* – A covered employee must submit to alcohol or controlled substance testing whenever there is reasonable suspicion of alcohol misuse or the use of controlled substances based on specific, contemporaneous, and articulable observations concerning the appearance, behavior, speech, or bodily odors of the employee.
- e. *Return-to-Duty Testing* – A covered employee must submit to return-to-work alcohol and/or controlled substance test before being permitted to return to work following a positive alcohol or controlled substance test or other violation of this policy or federal regulations.
- f. *Follow-up Testing* – Any employee who continues performing safety-sensitive functions for the Board, following a determination that the employee requires assistance in resolving problems associated with alcohol misuse or the use of controlled substances, shall be subject to unannounced follow-up alcohol or controlled substance testing as directed by the Board's substance abuse professional (SAP).

5.17.4 Administration of Program – The Superintendent is authorized to oversee the Board's testing program, to contract with appropriate providers to implement the program, to develop guidelines, rules and regulations, to implement training programs, to develop and distribute educational materials and appropriate notices to covered employees, and to take such further action as may be required by federal law.

[Reference: Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991]

5.17.5 Compliance with Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse Requirements – In accordance with federal law, covered employees must consent to an appropriate federal Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse query in order to operate a commercial motor vehicle for the Board. Each covered employee must sign a limited consent for the Board's designee to conduct a limited Clearinghouse query. Any covered employee who declines to give consent for a limited query will not be permitted to operate a commercial motor vehicle for the Board until such consent is given. Limited queries do not reveal specific information about employees. If a limited query shows that there is information in the Clearinghouse on the covered employee, the covered employee must consent to a full query, which must be conducted immediately. The covered employee will not be permitted to drive or perform safety-sensitive functions until the query results confirm that the employee's Clearinghouse record contains no prohibitions as defined under the regulations.

Any covered employee whose record reveals such prohibitions will not be permitted to drive or otherwise perform safety-sensitive functions until the covered employee successfully completes the return-to-duty process. Any covered employee's refusal to consent or to successfully complete the return-to-duty process in accordance with federal law will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

5.17.6 Reports to Clearinghouse – The following information will be reported to the Clearinghouse in accordance with FHWA regulations:

- a. A verified positive, adulterated, or substituted drug test;
- b. An alcohol confirmation test with a concentration of 0.04 or higher;
- c. A refusal to submit to any test required by law, as enumerated above;
- d. The Board's report of actual knowledge as defined by law (i.e., direct observation, information from previous employer(s), or a traffic citation for driving a commercial motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances), of:
 - (1) On duty use;
 - (2) Pre-duty use;
 - (3) Alcohol use following an accident;
 - (4) Controlled substance use;
- e. A substance abuse professional's (SAP) (as defined by law) report of successful completion of the return-to-duty process;
- f. A negative return-to-duty test; and
- g. The Board's report of completion of follow-up testing.

5.17.7 Disciplinary Action – The availability of a return-to-duty process and/or follow-up testing under this policy does not obligate the Board to provide an employee with those opportunities. The Board reserves the right to terminate or otherwise discipline employees who violate this policy in accordance with applicable state law.

[Reference 49 U.S.C. §31306a; 49 C.F.R. §382.701, et. seq.]

5.18 Searches (Personnel)

- a. *Board Property* – All school system property, facilities, and grounds may be entered, inspected, and searched for any lawful purpose by Board officials or their designees at any time, without prior notice and to the fullest extent permitted by law. The right to enter, inspect, and search includes and extends to (but is not limited to) Board owned or controlled offices, desks, file cabinets, lockers, storage areas, computers, files, documents, data, and devices however and wherever kept, stored, or maintained.
- b. *Employee Property* – The Board reserves the right to inspect employees' vehicles, purses, files, and other personal property if a supervisor forms a reasonable individualized suspicion that the property contains evidence of a violation of Board policy or contains any material, object, or substance that otherwise creates or presents a risk of harm or injury to the school, the workplace, or persons therein. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action.
- c. *Use of Recovered Items* – Property, material, substances, information, or records that are obtained, discovered, or recovered as a result of a search may be retained and used for any lawful purpose.

5.19 Prohibition on Aiding and Abetting Sexual Abuse

Neither the board nor any employee, contractor or agent of the board shall assist another school employee, contractor or agent in obtaining a new job if the individual or the board knows, or has probable cause to believe, that the other employee, contractor, or agent engaged in sexual misconduct regarding a minor or student in violation of the law. This prohibition does not apply to the routine transmission of administrative and personnel files.

In addition, this prohibition does not apply if the information giving rise to probable cause has been properly reported to a law enforcement agency with jurisdiction over the alleged misconduct, and has been reported to any other authorities as required by local, state or federal law, and at least one of the following conditions applies:

1. The matter has been officially closed or the prosecutor or police with jurisdiction over the alleged misconduct has investigated the allegations and notified school officials that there is insufficient information to establish probable cause that the school employee, contractor, or agent engaged in sexual misconduct regarding a minor or student in violation of the law; or

2. The school employee, contractor, or agent has been charged with, and acquitted or otherwise exonerated of the alleged misconduct; or
3. The case or investigation remains open and there have been no charges filed against or indictment of the school employee, contractor or agent within four years of the date on which the information was reported to a law enforcement agency.

[Reference: 20 U.S.C. §7926]

VI. Students

6.1 *Admissions and Attendance*

- 6.1.1 Compulsory Attendance and Entrance Age – All persons between the age of six (6) and seventeen (17) years of age are required by state law to attend school for the minimum number of scholastic days prescribed by the State Board of Education unless the person holds a certificate of exemption issued by the Superintendent or is otherwise exempt under state law.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-28-3 (1975)]

6.1.2 Admission to Schools -

- a. *Resident Students* – School-age children who reside within Jackson County, Alabama, and not within the limits of a city operating an independent municipal school system, may be admitted to Jackson County Schools. For purposes of this policy, the residence of the student will be the residence of the custodial parent or legal guardian. If custody of the child is shared, alternating, or unclear, or if the child does not reside with a custodial parent or legal guardian, the domicile or actual physical residence of the child will control, except when there is evidence that the claimed residence of the child is not his actual residence, or that the claimed residence is fraudulently given as a means of avoiding or violating admission, enrollment, attendance, and residency standards and requirements.
- b. *Non-resident Students* – The Board may permit students who do not reside within the Jackson County school system to attend schools within the school system. The Board may establish criteria for admission of non-resident students and may require the payment of tuition as a prerequisite to enrollment. The Board will not provide transportation to and from school or homebound instruction outside of the limits of the Jackson County School District, unless required by law.
- c. *Admission Policy for Homeless, Migratory, Immigrant, and Limited English Proficient Students* – All homeless, migrant, immigrant, and English Learner students and children in foster care will have equal access to the same free appropriate public education, including public preschool education, provided to other children and youth and will be provided the opportunity to meet the same challenging state content and state student performance standards to which all students are held without being stigmatized or isolated.

The enrollment of homeless, migrant, immigrant, and English learner students and children in foster care shall not be denied or

delayed due to any barriers that are specifically prohibited by applicable law, which may include the following:

- Lack of birth certificate
- Lack of school records or transcripts
- Lack of immunization or health records
- Lack of proof of residency
- Lack of transportation
- Guardianship or custody requirements
- Lack of social security card

d. *Homeless Students* –

- (i) *Enrollment.* Homeless students will be permitted to enroll without regard to residency status and will not be denied services offered to other students in the school system. Homeless students may also be entitled to other accommodations under federal law.

Homeless students will continue in the school they attended before becoming homeless for the duration of their homelessness, or for the remainder of the academic year if the student becomes permanently housed during an academic year. Otherwise, a homeless student may be enrolled in any school in the system that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the student is living are eligible to attend.

- (ii) *Dispute Resolution.* When a dispute arises regarding school placement, the system will immediately enroll the homeless student in the school in which enrollment is sought by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, pending resolution of the dispute. The school will provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of the decision, a statement of the right to appeal, and the procedure for appealing the placement decision. The principal of the school will notify the Board's Homeless Liaison of the dispute.

- (iii) The Homeless Liaison will expeditiously carry out the system's dispute resolution procedures as detailed in the Board's homeless student plan.

e. *Students in Foster Care* – A student in foster care will enroll or remain in the student's school of origin, unless it is determined that remaining in the school of origin is not in such student's best interest.

If it is not in a student's best interest to stay in the school of origin, a student in foster care may be enrolled in any school in the system that serves the attendance area in which the student is living, even if the

student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment. The school system will immediately contact the school last attended by the student to obtain relevant academic and other records.

[Reference: 20 U.S.C. §§6311(g)(I)(E)]

- f. *Students Expelled or Suspended from Other School Systems* – Any student who is under suspension or expulsion from another school system or a private, parochial, or other school will not be permitted to enroll until the student has satisfied the conditions for readmission set by the expelling or suspending board or authority in addition to generally applicable admission requirements established by the Board, which may include temporary attendance at the alternative school.
- g. *Required Documentation* – Students entering the school system for the first time, regardless of grade level, are not required to submit a birth certificate, but may be requested to submit a birth certificate or another form of acceptable documentation to verify the student's age. A social security number may also be requested, but such request is voluntary and is not a requirement of enrollment.

In addition, students may also be required to submit other registration materials as school officials may reasonably require including, but not limited to, a certificate of immunization or an exemption as prescribed by the Department of Public Health and signed by a private physician or appropriate health department official. The Superintendent may accept alternate forms of evidence or modify otherwise applicable requirements as necessary and appropriate to accommodate migrant, immigrant, limited English proficient or homeless students.

- h. *Placement of Students* – The Board will determine the placement of newly enrolled students in accordance with state law.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02(7)(k) & (l)]

- 6.1.3 Class Assignment – Principals will assign students to classes in keeping with standards that best accommodate student needs and ensure teaching and learning.
- 6.1.4 Absences and Excuses – Students are not permitted to be absent from school without a valid excuse. Absences will be designated as excused or unexcused. Excused absences will be permitted for the following reasons:

- Personal illness
- Hospitalization
- Emergency
- Death in immediate family
- Court subpoena
- Religious holidays

Absences approved by the principal

Documentation supporting an excused absence must be submitted in a timely manner or the absence will be deemed to be unexcused. Excessive unexcused absences may result in a loss of academic credit or referral of the matter to juvenile or other appropriate legal authorities for investigation.

- 6.1.5 Truancy – Parents or guardians are required to ensure that students under their care, custody or control attend school regularly. Habitual or excessive absence from school may require Board officials to refer the matter to juvenile authorities or to initiate truancy proceedings.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-28-1, *et seq.* (1975); Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02]

6.2 Transfers and Withdrawals

- 6.2.1 Transfers – Students who reside in Jackson County will be allowed to transfer from one school in the Jackson County School System to another Jackson County school as a matter of course:

- a. If the transfer is requested within the first three (3) days of school; or
- b. A legal change in residency occurs.

This applies to all Jackson County schools.

The school system may permit transfers between schools within the school system in other circumstances for good cause. Such transfer requests must be submitted in writing and must include detailed reasons for the request. The Superintendent may approve or deny a transfer request in light of the stated reasons for the request, the capacity and resources of the schools, the student's record (including behavior, grades, attendance, and other factors), and the best interests of the student and of the school system. The existence or availability of a transfer process does not create or give rise to any right to attend a particular school, and school assignment remains wholly with the discretion of the Board.

- 6.2.2 Withdrawals – No student of compulsory attendance age will be permitted to withdraw from school except in accordance with state law and any withdrawal procedures that may be developed by the Superintendent.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02]

6.3 Student Fees, Fines, and Charges

Reasonable fees, fines, and charges not prohibited by law may be established and/or approved by the Superintendent. All such fees, fines, and charges will be collected and accounted for in accordance with the procedures, rules, and regulations to be developed by the Chief School Financial Officer or as provided in the Board finance or local school finance manual(s).

6.4 Concussions

Drawing on such medical and other authoritative publications and resources as may be available, the Board will:

- a. Develop materials and information that are designed to educate students and their parents or guardians about the nature of concussion and brain injury and the risks of continuing to participate in athletics after receiving a concussion or brain injury;
- b. Suitably summarize such materials on a concussion and head injury information sheet which is to be provided annually to current and prospective student athletes and their parents or guardians. Prior to the student's participation in practice or competition, the head coach of the team must obtain and keep on file a copy of the information worksheet signed by the team member and his or her parent or guardian.
- c. Develop a program designed to educate coaches on how to learn to recognize the symptoms of a concussion and how to seek proper medical treatment for a person suspected of having a concussion. The training shall be provided by qualified medical personnel or persons with special expertise in recognizing and responding to concussions and brain injuries, and shall be offered to every coach prior to the beginning of practice for the athletic team that he or she coaches.
- d. Promulgate or otherwise inform coaches of the statutory requirement that a youth athlete must be removed "from participation and may not return to play the day of the injury and until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed physician and receives written clearance to return to play from a licensed physician."

The Board may use information and forms prepared by the Alabama High School Athletic Association as they may be revised from time to time, but nothing in any such materials should be interpreted or otherwise understood to create a duty or standard of care on the part of any person charged with its implementation.

[Reference: Ala. Code §22-11E-2 as amended by Act of Alabama 2012-314]

6.5 Extracurricular Activities

6.5.1 General – Students may be offered an opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities and organizations. Extracurricular activities must meet the following criteria:

- a. The organization or activity must be approved by the school principal and must have an assigned faculty supervisor or sponsor;
- b. The organization or activity must promote or serve the intellectual, cultural, personal, or physical development of the student in a manner that is consistent with the purposes of public education, the Board's legal

mandate, mission statement, policies, and regulations, and with applicable requirements of state and federal law;

- c. The organization or activity must operate under and subject to general supervision of school officials; and
- d. The nature of the organization and its activities are not inconsistent with and do not interfere with instructional activities or requirements.

Student participation or membership in such organization activities may be governed by the specific policies of the organization and is subject to review and approval by the principal.

6.5.2 Athletics – Participation in Board sanctioned athletic programs will be on such terms and conditions as may be approved by the Board and any athletic association of which the Board or the applicable local school is a member. Schools may establish terms and conditions for participation in such programs as long as school eligibility criteria are not inconsistent with system-wide eligibility or participation criteria, rules, regulations, or standards established by any athletic association or organization of which the Board or the applicable local school is a member, or any rule, principle, or provision of applicable law.

6.5.3 Academic Eligibility Requirements – Academic eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities will be based on any academic eligibility requirements approved by the school system, required by any athletic association or governing body of which the Board or the applicable local school is a member, or provided by applicable state law.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02(18)]

6.6 Off-Campus Events

Student participation in and travel to off-campus events, concerts, functions, and activities, and the use of school buses or other transportation for such purposes may be authorized under and subject to the following terms and conditions:

- a. The destination is an activity, event, or function that services a *bona fide* educational or related extracurricular purpose, or is an athletic event or function sponsored or sanctioned by the school or the school system and the state athletic association;
- b. Adequate information regarding the trip (e.g., destination, duration, purpose, educational purpose, mode of transportation, nature and extent of student participation) has been provided to the Superintendent.
- c. If transportation is provided by the school system, adequate arrangements are made for supervision and other risk management considerations (e.g.,

parental permission, medical treatment authorization, special insurance requirements);

- d. Properly certified and qualified drivers have been selected and arrangements for the costs of the trip (e.g., salary, fuel, maintenance, lodging) have been made; and
- e. Prior approval of the trip is obtained from the Superintendent.

The Superintendent is authorized to develop additional specific requirements for participation in and travel to and from official events and activities that are consistent with the terms of this policy.

6.7 *Student Publications*

The Superintendent is authorized to develop rules and regulations regarding student publications. Student publications are subject to and will be expected to meet standards associated with responsible journalism. The principal and student publication sponsor are responsible for the content of such publications.

6.8 *Equal Educational Opportunities*

No student will be unlawfully excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination in any program or activity offered or sponsored by the Board on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, disability, creed, national origin, sex, immigrant or migrant status, non-English speaking ability, or homeless status.

6.9 *Title IX*

6.9.1 Prohibition – In accordance with Title IX (20 U.S.C. §1681, *et seq.*), the Board strictly prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex or gender in its programs or activities, including sexual harassment, as defined by law and Board policy. Sexual harassment complaints should be filed and reviewed under the Board's student sexual harassment policy. All other complaints under Title IX will be filed and reviewed according to the Board's general complaint and grievance procedures.

6.9.2 Title IX Coordinator – The Superintendent is authorized and directed to designate a Title IX Coordinator, whose duties will include but not be limited to receiving and responding to Title IX inquiries and complaints.

6.10 *Voluntary Religious Expression*

The Board does not discriminate against students or their parents or guardians on the basis of their religious viewpoints or their expression of such viewpoints. Such views and expressions are treated in the same manner as nonreligious viewpoints, activities, or expressions.

Students may express their religious beliefs in all phases of their schoolwork without penalty or reward based upon the religious nature or content of such expression. Schoolwork is evaluated according to the academic standards and pedagogical objectives that otherwise apply to the work or activity in question. These standards and objectives included but are not limited to acquisition and/or mastery of factual information; development of analytical, problem solving, learning, critical thinking, communication, organizational, and social skills; college preparatory and career readiness training; proficiency in and appreciation of the performing arts; and the development of personal skills that are designed to facilitate attainment of the foregoing objectives, future academic success, and employability. The scholastic work of the system's students will be evaluated in light of the foregoing standards and objectives, academic and curricular guidelines and criteria established or approved by the State or the Jackson County Board of Education, and determined by evaluation, achievement, assessment, and testing materials, instruments, methods, and measures that have been generally recognized as appropriate for such purposes within the educational community and applied successfully in public school settings.

Students may organize and participate in religious activities before, during, and after school and have access to school facilities to the same extent students are permitted to organize and participate in other noncurricular activities to the extent that such access to or use of Board facilities does not constitute a constitutionally impermissible endorsement or sponsorship of the organization or violate any right established by or imposed by either the State of Alabama or United States Constitution.

6.11 *Student Sexual Harassment*

6.11.1 Sexual Harassment Prohibited – Sexual harassment in any form that is directed toward students is prohibited. Persons who violate the policy will be subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences up to and including termination (for employees) and expulsion (for students) as dictated by the nature and severity of the violation and other relevant considerations. If appropriate, the circumstances constituting the violation may be reported to law enforcement agencies or child welfare agencies for further investigation and action.

6.11.2 Definition – For purposes of this policy, sexual harassment means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, other physical or verbal conduct or communications of a sexual nature, and any other gender-based harassment, whether initiated by students, school employees, or third parties, when:

- a. Submission to the conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the student's education, including any aspect of the student's participation in school-sponsored activities, or any other aspect of the student's education;
- b. Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for decisions affecting the student's academic performance, participation in school-sponsored activities, or any other aspect of the student's education;
- c. The conduct has the purpose and effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's academic performance or participation in school-sponsored activities or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive education environment.

The following are examples of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment, depending on the circumstances:

- a. Verbal harassment or abuse of a sexual nature, including graphic comments, the display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, and sexual propositions;
- b. Repeated unwelcome solicitations of sexual activity or sexual contact;
- c. Unwelcome, inappropriate sexual touchings;
- d. Demands for sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment or threats with regard to the student's educational status.

6.11.3 Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures Authorized – The Superintendent is authorized and directed to establish, implement and revise more detailed sexual harassment complaint procedures that are designed to provide students who believe that they are victims of unlawful sexual harassment with a thorough, discreet, and prompt internal procedure for investigating and resolving sexual harassment complaints. The procedures will be drafted so as to facilitate the gathering of relevant facts and evidence, permit timely assessment of the merits of the complaint, provide an opportunity for informal resolution of complaint where appropriate, eliminate any harassment that is established by the investigation, and prevent any retaliation based upon the filing of the complaint. The procedures will reflect due regard for the legal rights and interests of all persons involved in the complaint, and will be drafted, explained, and implemented so as to be understandable and accessible to all student population groups and ages.

6.11.4 Initial Confrontation of Accused Harasser Not Required – A student who invokes the harassment complaint procedure will not be required to present the complaint to the accused or suspected harasser for resolution. Students will be permitted to report allegations of suspected harassment to any appropriate Board administrator, teacher, counselor, or employee, and such persons have a duty to promptly refer

such allegations to the Superintendent or to take such action as may be required by the procedures established under “Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures Authorized” (6.11.3) above. In no case will any employee who is the subject of a complaint be permitted to conduct, review, or otherwise exercise decisionmaking responsibility in connection with the processing of the complaint.

- 6.11.5 Notice of Policy to be Promulgated – The Superintendent will promulgate and disseminate this policy and the complaint procedures to the schools and will take such other steps and measures as may be reasonably available and expedient for informing the school community of the conduct prohibited by this policy and the recourse available to students who believe that they have been subjected to sexual harassment.

6.12 *Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment*

- 6.12.1 Consent – The Board will obtain parental consent before students are required to participate in a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED):

- a. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent(s);
- b. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
- c. Sexual behavior or attitudes;
- d. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- e. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
- f. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
- g. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parent(s); or
- h. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

- 6.12.2 Notice and Option to Opt Out – Parents will be provided notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of any of the following:

- a. Any survey that is designated to obtain protected information from a student, regardless of the source of funding;
- b. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening that is required as a condition of attendance, that is administered by the school or its agent, and that is not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety

of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law; and

- c. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or for the purpose of selling or otherwise distributing the information to others.

6.12.3 Inspection – Parents will be allowed to inspect, upon request and before administration or use, the following:

- a. Protected information surveys of students;
- b. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
- c. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

6.12.4 Special Provisions for Certain Students – Students who are at least 18 years old and emancipated minors under state law will be allowed to take the above actions in lieu of their parents or guardians.

6.12.5 Additional Policies and Procedures Authorized – In consultation with parents, the Superintendent is authorized to develop additional policies, and arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and in the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The Board will directly notify parents of these policies and procedures at the beginning of each school year and after any substantive changes are approved.

[Reference: 20 U.S.C. §1232h; 34 CFR Part 98]

6.13 *Student Records*

Educational records as defined by law or Board policy will be available for examination and review by authorized persons in the manner prescribed and to the extent required by law. Except where the context requires otherwise, the term “educational records” has the meaning given in 20 U.S.C. §1232g(a)(4). Copies of such records may likewise be provided to the extent required and under circumstances specified by applicable law or regulation. The Superintendent is authorized to establish administrative standards and for the reproduction thereof. Parents will be provided required annual notification regarding educational records through the student handbook or by other appropriate means.

[Reference: 20 U.S.C. §1232g(a)(4); 34 CFR 99.3]

6.14 *Student Health Services*

The Board may offer limited student health services that are designed to address minor medical issues that may arise during the school day or to assist with special or chronic

health problems. In cases of acute or contagious illnesses, parents or guardians may be notified and required to pick up the student. If a parent or guardian is not available, the principal or school nurse may contact the Department of Human Resources. School officials are authorized to take reasonable and appropriate steps to provide or arrange for the provision of emergency medical services to students who require immediate medical attention. In case of illness or accidental injury not requiring immediate medical attention, standard first aid procedures may be followed. The Superintendent is authorized to develop and promulgate procedures, rules, and regulations concerning anaphylaxis and the taking, administration, and handling of medication at school consistent with state law and appropriate health standards.

6.15 *Student Conduct*

The Superintendent will prepare and present to the Board for adoption and periodic revision a Code of Student Conduct (“CSC”), with input from teachers, school personnel, students, parents and guardians, and other members of the education community and, as appropriate, the community at large. The CSC will comprehensively describe the rules and standards of conduct and discipline that will be maintained and enforced within the Jackson County school system. The CSC will set forth the specific grounds for disciplinary action, the penalties, sanctions, or consequences that may be imposed for a violation of the CSC, the methods and procedures by which violations of the CSC will be determined, and any appeal or review procedures that are available to students. The CSC will incorporate applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, and the hearing and appeal procedures specified in the CSC will conform to applicable statutory and constitutional standards and requirements.

The CSC may be incorporated in a student handbook and will be made available to all teachers, school personnel, students, parents and guardians at the beginning of each school year. The CSC will be deemed an extension of Board policy and will have the force and effect thereof.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §§16-28-12, 16-28A-1 to 3 (1975); Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02, 290-8-9-.09]

6.16 *Searches (Students)*

- a. *Board Property* – All school system property, facilities, and grounds may be entered, inspected, and searched for any lawful purpose by Board officials or their designees at any time, without prior notice and to the fullest extent permitted by law. The right to enter, inspect, and search includes and extends to (but is not limited to) Board owned or controlled offices, desks, file cabinets, lockers, computers, files, documents, data, and devices however and wherever kept, stored, or maintained.
- b. *Personal Property* – Personal property, including but not limited to vehicles, purses, wallets, gym bags, book bags, cell phones, computers, and “personal digital assistant” (PDA) devices may be searched by authorized school officials, including school principals or their designees, when reasonable suspicion exists that the property contains prohibited materials, illegal substances, weapons, or

other items that are reasonably deemed to present a risk or threat to the safety or welfare of the school community.

- c. *Personal Searches* – Students may be searched whenever reasonable suspicion exists that the student possesses prohibited materials, illegal substances, weapons, or other items that are reasonably deemed to present a risk or threat to the safety and welfare of the school community. Student searches must be conducted by a school administrator in the presence of another certified school employee and may include a private pat down of the student, a search of personal items and clothing, or a more thorough search upon specific approval of the Superintendent. Personal searches will be conducted with due regard for the age and gender of the student. Searches that require physical contact between the school official and the student, removal of clothing, or examination of the student in a way that would implicate privacy concerns must be conducted and witnessed by officials of the same gender as the student and in a way that preserves the dignity of the student to the extent practicable under the circumstances. Refusal to submit to a search or to cooperate in a search as provided in this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action.
- d. *Use of Recovered Items* – Property, material, substances, information, or records that are obtained, discovered, or recovered as a result of a search may be retained and used for any lawful purpose.

6.17 Corporal Punishment

The Board allows reasonable corporal punishment of students under the following terms and conditions. Corporal punishment will be administered only as a disciplinary measure, with due regard for the age and physical condition of the student, and without excessive force. Corporal punishment will be administered by the school principal or his representative in the presence of another adult professional school system employee. Corporal punishment should not be administered in the presence of another student. The Superintendent is authorized to develop and implement procedures for administering and documenting corporal punishment, consistent with the terms of this policy.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-28A-2 (1975)]

6.18 Physical Restraint

The Superintendent is authorized to develop written procedures governing the use of physical restraint as required by state law. The procedures will be published in accordance with the requirements of state law.

[Reference: ALA. ADMIN. CODE §§290-3-1-.01, 290-3-1-.02]

6.19 Student Suspension (including Students with Disabilities)

In order to maintain order, minimize the risk of potential personal injury, property damage or disruption, or to permit an orderly investigation and evaluation of a suspected

violation of school or school system rules, standards, or policies, principals may temporarily suspend a student pending a conference with the parent or guardian of the student and a final disciplinary decision. Suspension may also be imposed as a disciplinary measure as provided in the Code of Student Conduct. Suspensions will be counted as excused absences. Make up work will be permitted for such absences unless permitting such work under the circumstances would be impractical or impossible, would serve no purpose, would place school personnel at risk of harm, or would be unreasonable in light of the grounds for the suspension. Suspension of students with disabilities will be subject to applicable limitations and requirements imposed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") and its implementing regulations. Students may be referred to the Jackson County Alternative School.

6.20 *Student Expulsion (including Students with Disabilities)*

Students may be expelled from school for offenses serious enough to warrant such action as provided in Code of Student Conduct or other Board disciplinary policies. Students who are recommended for expulsion may be suspended until such time as the Board meets to consider the recommendation for expulsion. Reasonable notice of the proposed action, the reasons therefore, and an opportunity to be heard will be afforded to the student and the student's parent or guardian prior to a final decision by the Board regarding expulsion. The Superintendent will notify the student or the student's parent or guardian, in writing, of any action taken by the Board. The term of an expulsion may extend to the maximum permitted by law. The Board may impose such reasonable limitations on the student's right to re-enroll in the school system following expiration of expulsion as may be permitted by law. A student who withdraws from school prior to the Board's consideration of a proposed expulsion may not re-enroll in the school system until the Board holds a hearing or other appropriate proceedings regarding the recommended expulsion. Expulsion of students with disabilities will be subject to applicable limitations and requirements imposed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") and its implementing regulations.

6.21 *Electronic Communication Devices*

Personal, wireless communication devices include, but are not limited to cellular telephones, smart phones, pocket pagers, e-mail devices, tablets, or any other electronic communication device. Students may possess a cell phone or other personal, wireless communication device on school property, but use of such devices during the school day is limited to uses expressly permitted by the supervising teacher or administrator. The Board assumes no responsibility for theft, loss, or damage to any personal, wireless communication device. Principals or their designees have the authority to restrict and deny the use of personal, wireless communication devices by any student to prevent the misuse, abuse, or violation of school rules regarding the use of such devices. School officials may read, examine, or inspect the contents of any such device upon reasonable suspicion that the device contains evidence of a violation of Board policy, the Code of Student Conduct, or other rules, provided that the nature and extent of such examination shall be reasonably related and limited to the suspected violation.

6.22 Drivers' License

6.22.1 Drivers' License – A person under the age of 19 years may not under state law obtain a driver's license or a learner's permit without being enrolled in school or meeting alternative criteria established by law. Additionally, a driver's license may be suspended or revoked if a student withdraws or fails to attend school. Students may be exempted or excused from otherwise applicable statutory requirements if their withdrawal or nonattendance is caused by circumstances beyond the control of the student. Circumstances beyond the control of the student may be found with respect to:

- a. Students who are mentally or physically unable to attend school;
- b. Students who are regularly and legally employed in compliance with the provisions of the Child Labor Law; and
- c. Students who, because of the lack of public transportation, are compelled to walk more than two miles to attend a public school.

Students who are denied a driver's license by virtue of their nonenrollment may appeal a decision affecting the student's eligibility for a driver's license to the Superintendent. The appeal should be in writing and filed with the school principal within 15 days of the decision from which the appeal is taken, and should set forth the reasons on which the appeal is based. An appeal should be promptly forwarded to the Superintendent for review and final decision.

6.22.2 Administrative Procedures Authorized – The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures to implement the provisions of this policy and to comply fully with state law.

6.23 Student Parking Privileges – Substance Abuse Policy

In order to promote the safety and welfare of students and others who work on or visit school campuses, to encourage the development of safe and responsible driving practices, and to serve the general purposes of maintaining a drug and alcohol free school environment, students will be granted the privilege of driving and parking on school property only if they are free of the effects of alcohol or other illegal or controlled substances. Accordingly, any student who desires to drive a vehicle on school property or park on school property may be required to submit to periodically or randomly administered sobriety or drug tests as a condition to issuance of a permit authorizing the operation or parking of a motor vehicle on school grounds. Principals may impose reasonable additional conditions or requirements for the privilege of driving or parking a vehicle on school property including, for example, conditions relating to maintenance of academic and attendance standards and the payment of fees. Principals may also

establish priorities for issuance and assignment of parking permits. The Board reserves the right to require that sobriety or drug tests or screenings be passed as a condition to maintaining parking or vehicle permits, or privileges relating to use of a motor vehicle. Such testing or screening may also be performed whenever a school official observes or is made aware of circumstances that provide reasonable suspicion or belief that the student has used alcohol, illegal drugs, or other substances in violation of the Board's substance abuse policies. All such testing or screening will be performed in accordance with local, state and federal laws and procedures that are developed by the Superintendent for approval by the Board.

6.24 *Student Extracurricular Activity Substance Abuse Policy*

In order to promote the safety and welfare of students who participate in extracurricular activities, to insure that such participation is neither impaired nor any risk of injury exacerbated, to provide incentives to students to maintain safe and healthful practices, and to promote a school environment that is free of alcohol and illegal drugs or controlled substances, the Board reserves the right to require any student who participates in extracurricular programs or other activities to submit to sobriety tests or screening for illegal drugs or controlled substances prior to, during, or following an event, practice, competition, or at any other time while the student is under the supervision of the school system. Such testing or screening may also be performed whenever a school official observes or is made aware of circumstances that provide reasonable suspicion or belief that the student has used alcohol, illegal drugs, or other substances in violation of the Board's substance abuse policies. All such testing or screening will be performed in accordance with local, state and federal laws, and procedures that are developed by the Superintendent for approval by the Board.

6.25 *Jamari Terrell Williams Student Bullying Prevention Act Policy*

6.25.1 Bullying, Intimidation, Violence, and Threats of Violence Prohibited - No student shall engage in nor should any be subjected to bullying, violence, threats of violence or intimidation by any other student that is based on any of the specific characteristics set forth in this policy. Students who violate this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanctions as specified in the Student Code of Conduct and applicable law, subject to the investigating school administrator's authority and decision.

6.25.2 Definitions – In this policy, these terms shall have the following meanings:

- a. "Bullying" means a continuous pattern of intentional behavior on or off of school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function including, but not limited to: cyberbullying or written, electronic, verbal, or physical actions that are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any characteristic of a student, or by the association of a student with an individual who has a particular characteristic, if the characteristic falls into one of the categories of personal characteristics contained in this policy. To constitute bullying, a pattern of behavior may do any of the following:

- Place a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property;
 - Have the effect of substantially interfering with the educational performance, opportunities, or benefits of a student;
 - Have the effect of substantially disrupting or interfering with the orderly operation of the school whether the conduct occurs on or off school property, online, or electronically;
 - Have the effect of creating a hostile environment in the school, on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function; or
 - Have the effect of being sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.
- b. “Hostile environment” means the perception by an affected student that the conduct of another student constitutes a threat of violence or bullying and that the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person, under the circumstances, would agree that the conduct constitutes bullying, threat of assault, or assault.
- c. “Violence” means the unjustified infliction of physical force by a student with the intent to cause injury to another student or damage to the property of another student.
- d. “Threat” means a statement of an intention to inflict pain, injury, damage, or other hostile action to cause fear of harm. The intention may be communicated through an electronic, written, verbal, or physical act to cause fear, mental distress, or interference in the school environment. The intention may be expressly stated or implied and the person communicating the threat has the ability to carry out the threat.
- e. “Threat of violence” means an unjustified expression of intention to inflict injury or damage that is made by a student and directed to another student.
- f. “Intimidation” means an unjustified threat or other action that is intended to cause fear or apprehension in a student.
- g. “Student” as used in this policy means a person who is enrolled in the Jackson County Schools system.

6.25.3 Description of Behavior Expected of Students -

- a. Students are expected to treat other students with courtesy, respect, and dignity and comply with the Code of Student Conduct. Students are expected and required (1) to comply with the requirements of law, policy, regulation, and rules prohibiting bullying, violence, or intimidation; (2) to refrain from inflicting or threatening to inflict violence, injury, or damage to the person or property of another student, and (3) to refrain from placing another student in fear of being subjected to violence, injury, or damage when such actions or threats are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any personal characteristic of the student that is identified in this policy.
- b. Bullying, intimidation, violence, or threats of violence are prohibited and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary consequences and/or sanctions if the perpetrator of such action is found to have based the prohibited action on one or more of the following personal characteristics of the student:
 - Race
 - Sex
 - Religion
 - National origin
 - Disability

6.25.4 Consequences for Violations – A series of graduated consequences for any violation of this policy will be those outlined in the Code of Student Conduct or any rule or standard adopted under authority of this policy.

6.25.5 Reporting, Investigation, and Complaint Resolution Procedures –

- a. Complaints alleging violations of this policy may be made on a Board-approved complaint form available in the handbook, on the website, or at the school's office. The complaint must be delivered to the principal or the principal's designee either by mail or personal delivery. Incidental or minor violations of the policy may be presented and resolved informally.

The complaint form developed to report violations of this policy will include a provision for reporting a threat of suicide by a student. If a threat of suicide is reported, the principal or the principal's designee is authorized to inform the student's parent or guardian of the report unless at the discretion of the school principal or the principal's designee the apparent cause of the threat of suicide is child abuse or other significant harm from a parent or guardian.

- b. Upon receipt of the complaint, the principal or the principal's designee will determine if the complaint alleges a serious violation of this policy. If the principal or the principal's designee determines that the complaint

alleges a serious violation, the principal or the principal's designee will undertake a reasonably prompt investigation of the complaint. The investigation will entail the gathering of relevant facts and evidence taking into account the circumstances of the complaint. If the investigation establishes a violation, appropriate disciplinary sanctions may be imposed on the offending student(s). Other measures that are reasonably calculated to prevent a recurrence of the violations(s) may also be imposed by the principal or the school system.

- c. Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any student who has reported a violation of this policy or sought relief provided by this policy are prohibited, and are themselves a violation of this policy. Any confirmed acts of reprisal or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary sanctions that may include any sanction, penalty, or consequence that is available to school officials under the Code of Student Conduct. A student who deliberately, recklessly, and falsely accuses another student of a violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary sanctions as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct.

6.25.6 Promulgation of Policy and Related Procedures, Rules, and Forms – This policy and any procedures, rules and forms developed and approved to implement the policy will be published on the website of each local board of education and school, shall be available at each school office, and shall be included in the student handbook that is distributed to each student at the beginning of each school year.

6.25.7 Construction of Policy – This policy is supplemental to other Board policies and procedures and does not repeal, replace, or supersede any other prohibition on harassment, violence, threats of violence or intimidation found elsewhere in Board policy or procedure, including the Code of Student Conduct. This policy shall not be construed to allow harassment, violence, threats of violence or intimidation for any reason not specifically listed in this policy or to prohibit the Board from disciplining students for acts of harassment, violence, threats of violence or intimidation not specifically listed herein. Students who engage in harassment, violence, threats of violence or intimidation not specifically covered by this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct.

[Reference: Ala. Code §16-28B-1, *et seq.* (1975)]

6.26 Suicide Awareness and Prevention

6.26.1 Program Authorized – To the extent that the Legislature appropriates funds or the Board provides funds from other sources, the Superintendent is authorized to develop a program to implement the following statutory requirements of the Jason Flatt Act in an effort to prevent student suicide:

- a. Foster individual, family, and group counseling services related to suicide prevention.
- b. Make referral, crisis intervention, and other related information available for students, parents, and school personnel.
- c. Foster training for school personnel who are responsible for counseling and supervising students.
- d. Increase student awareness of the relationship between drug and alcohol use and suicide.
- e. Educate students in recognizing signs of suicidal tendencies and other facts and warning signs of suicide.
- f. Inform students of available community suicide prevention services.
- g. Promote cooperative efforts between school personnel and community suicide prevention program personnel.
- h. Foster school-based or community-based, or both, alternative programs outside of the classroom.
- i. Develop a strategy to assist survivors of attempted suicide, students, and school personnel in coping with the issues relating to attempted suicide, suicide, the death of a student, and healing.
- j. Engage in any other program or activity which the Board determines is appropriate and prudent in the efforts of the school system to prevent student suicide.
- k. Provide training for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students on the Board policies to prevent harassment, intimidation, and threats of violence.
- l. Develop a process for discussing local board policies relating to the prevention of student suicide and to the prevention of harassment, intimidation, violence, and threats of violence with students.

- m. Provide annual training for all certificated. school employees in suicide awareness and prevention. This training may be provided within the framework of existing inservice training programs or as a part of required professional development offered by the school system.

Students may be required to participate in curricular activities developed to implement the statutory requirements of the Jason Flatt Act and are encouraged to participate in any other activities or strategies developed by the Board for that purpose.

- 6.26.2 Promulgation of Policy and Related Procedures, Rules, and Forms – This policy and any procedures, rules, and forms developed and approved to implement the policy will be published, disseminated, and made available to students, parents and legal guardians, and employees by such means and methods as are customarily used for such purposes.

[Reference: Ala. Code §16-28B-8]

6.27 *Annual Student Handbook*

The Annual Student Handbook is a Board policy.

6.28 *SUPERVISION OF LOW RISK JUVENILE SEX OFFENDERS POLICY¹*

6.28 *Supervision of Low Risk Juvenile Sex Offenders*

Pursuant to Annalyn’s Law, the Superintendent shall be notified to Annalyn’s Law, the Superintendent shall be notified by local law enforcement when a low risk juvenile sex offender is enrolled or attending school within the board’s jurisdiction for the purpose of appropriate supervision during the school day and during school activities.

- 6.28.1 Definitions - In this policy, these terms shall have the following meanings:

- a. “Plan” refers to the “individualized student safety plan” developed following the Student’s adjudication and/or enrollment in the school to serve as a behavior contract between contract between the Student and the School.
- b. “School” refers to “all school property and school-sponsored functions including, but not limited to, classroom instructional time, assemblies, athletic events, extracurricular activities, and school bus transportation” related to the Student’s current school of record.

¹ For boards that have participated in the AASB Policy Project, AASB recommends that this new policy be included in Section VI (Students) of the policy manual.

- c. “Student” refers to “the low risk juvenile sex offender” designated by a juvenile court judge as having a low risk of re-offense.
- d. “Teachers and staff with supervision over the student” or “Supervision team” refers to school officials or staff who have a specific responsibility for the Student, including the school principal, the Student’s assigned teachers and/or coaches, the Student’s counselor, and if applicable, the Student’s bus driver, during the subject school year and who will be privy to information regarding the Student’s status. Teachers and staff with only passing and/or general contact with the Student shall not be privy to information regarding the Student’s status.
- e. “Victim” refers to the victim, if known by and attending the same school as the Student, of the offense for which the Student was adjudicated delinquent.

6.28.2 Notification

- a. *Current Students* - In the event a currently enrolled Student is adjudicated delinquent and designated “low risk” by the juvenile court, local law enforcement is expected to notify the local Superintendent and principal of the Student’s school in writing.
- b. *Newly Enrolled Students* - In the event a Student seeks to enroll in the district as a new student, and that Student has been previously designated as a low risk juvenile sex offender, local law enforcement is expected to notify the local Superintendent and principal of the Student’s school in writing.
- c. *Students That Change Schools Within the District* - In the event a currently enrolled Student transfers to another school in the district or is promoted to another school in the district, the principal of the original school should notify designated law enforcement of the change as soon as practicable.

Following that notification, the principal of the original school should orally or in writing brief the principal of the new school regarding the original Plan and the transferring Student’s status and circumstances. Regardless, the principal of the prior school must provide the Student’s records and Safety Plan to the principal of the new school as soon as practicable.

The new principal should review the Plan and meet with the Student, the Student’s parent or guardian, and the anticipated new Supervision Team to determine whether the current terms are sufficient or should be adjusted based on the Student’s circumstances.

- d. *School Staff Changes* - In the event the principal or a member of the Supervision Team leaves his position or is no longer responsible for supervising the Student, a replacement team member should be named, if necessary and appropriate, and briefed by the principal or the most senior member of the Supervision Team regarding the Student's status and Plan. The Student, his parent or guardian, and other members of the Supervision Team should be notified of changes to the Supervision Team within a reasonable timeframe.

6.28.3 Plan Development and Maintenance - Upon proper notification from law enforcement, the Student's principal or designee will call together the anticipated Supervision Team to meet with the Student and/or the Student's parent or guardian to develop an appropriate Plan. This meeting should take place within 10 school days or as soon as practicable. In the event the Student's parent or guardian is unable or unwilling to meet, the principal or designee and the Supervision Team should meet with the Student within a reasonable timeframe to develop an appropriate Plan.

In the event the Victim attends the same school as the Student, the plan should include measures to reduce the likelihood of Victim and Student interaction.

The terms of the Plan and any updates to it must be memorialized in writing and approved by the principal or designee before being distributed to the Student and the Student's parent or guardian, as well as the Supervision Team.

The principal or designee should meet with the Student, the Student's parent or guardian, and the Supervision Team at least annually, but as often as deemed necessary by the principal or designee to assess the Student's status and to determine whether adjustments should be made to the Plan.

6.28.4 Supervision - The Student will be subject to the general Student Code of Conduct and any other conditions deemed necessary by the principal or designee as incorporated in the Student's Plan. Members of the Supervision Team should report any suspected violations of the Plan to the principal or designee.

The school officials and staff responsible for supervising the Student on a daily basis should do so in a manner that is discrete and unobtrusive.

6.28.5 Students with Disabilities - Discipline of Students with disabilities will be subject to applicable limitations and requirements imposed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and implementing regulations.

6.28.6 Violations of the Plan - In the event the Student violates the Student Code of Conduct or the Plan, the Student may be subject to discipline pursuant to board

policy and/or reassessment of the Plan's conditions.

- 6.28.7 Challenges to the Plan - In the event the Student and/or his parent or guardian object to conditions of the Plan or the application of a sanction, a challenge must be submitted in writing to the Superintendent or his designee to consider whether adjustment of the Plan or response modification is warranted. The Superintendent's decision shall be final. A response that constitutes disciplinary action will adhere to the applicable School disciplinary policies and procedures and the Student will be afforded process due thereunder.
- 6.28.8 Confidentiality - Information received by school officials or staff related to the Student's delinquent status must be treated as confidential from other students, staff members, officials and stakeholders. Any document identifying the Student's status should be safeguarded from unintentional disclosure by the members of the Supervision Team. Any school official or school employee who improperly discloses the Student's status to any other person may be subject to school discipline and/or criminal charges as provided by law.
- 6.28.9 Retaliation - Members of the Supervision Team should make every effort to treat the Student with the same respect and courtesy to which every student is entitled. The Team is reminded that the Student has been deemed by the juvenile court as not likely to reoffend and should be encouraged to fully integrate into the student body as a successful student. Mistreatment of any student may be cause for discipline.
- 6.28.10 Procedures - The Superintendent shall have the authority to develop appropriate training and additional procedures for staff members in furtherance of this policy.

[Reference: Ala. Act No. 2018-528, Ala. Code § 16-1-51.1 (1975)].

VII. Instructional Program

7.1 Curriculum

The Superintendent will coordinate the design and development of a comprehensive curriculum plan in accordance with state law and any requirements of the State Department of Education for approval by the Board.

7.2 Alabama Released Time Credit Act

7.2.1 Alabama Released Time Credit Act—Pursuant to the *Alabama Released Time Credit Act*, school districts may offer released time classes and, in grades where credit is earned, award students elective credit for classes taken during the school day in released time programs.

"Released time" is defined by the Act as a period of time *during the school day* when a student is allowed to participate in an elective course in religious instruction, conducted *off school district property*, by a private entity.

7.2.2 Student Participation and Earned Credits—

1. A student may participate in released time elective courses if all requirements of the LEA's Released Time Program *and* all the following are satisfied:
 - a. The parent or guardian of the student gives written consent.
 - b. The sponsoring entity maintains attendance records and makes them available to the public school the student attends.
 - c. The sponsoring entity makes provisions for and assumes liability for the student who is excused for released time.
 - d. No public funds are expended other than de minimis administrative costs.
 - e. No public school personnel are involved in providing the religious instruction,
2. Elective course credit may be earned if the course content and curriculum are approved by the local board in accordance with the *Alabama Administrative Code* and other ALSDE guidelines.

7.2.3 Attendance—

1. No student may be released from a required core curriculum class to attend released time.

2. No student may be released more than six (6) hours per week to attend released time.
 3. Student attendance in released time shall be calculated as part of the school day and subject to all normal attendance rules.
- 7.2.4 Transportation – Transportation to and from the place of released time, including transportation for any student with disabilities, is the complete responsibility of the sponsoring private entity, parent, guardian, or student and may not be arranged, coordinated, or provided for by public school personnel.

[Alabama Act. 2019-281]

7.3 *Textbooks (Hard or Digital Copy)*

Textbooks will be purchased and distributed in accordance with State Department of Education regulations. Only textbooks recommended by the local textbook committee will be approved by the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent. The local textbook committee will be appointed by the Board and will consist of members, including parents, who will serve a term of one year. Students may be loaned textbooks and/or digital devices for the duration of the course that requires the textbook and are responsible for the care of the textbook and or digital device. The Superintendent will develop procedures for assignment and usage of digital devices and textbooks. Students must reimburse the Board for the cost of any textbooks that are lost or damaged beyond reasonable wear and tear.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-36-62 (1975)]

7.4 *Academic Standards*

Teachers will assign grades and confer academic credit for work and activities performed by students in accordance with objective and generally accepted instructional and grading standards, applicable laws and regulations, and criteria hereinafter specified.

- 7.4.1 General Grade Scale – Grades for academic course work will be awarded according to the following scale:

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Numerical Grade (100 point scale)</u>	<u>Grade Point Average Points (4 point scale)</u>
A	90 – 100	4.00
B	80-89	3.00
C	70-79	2.00
D	60-69	1.00
F	Below 60	0.00

7.7 Dual Enrollment

Students are allowed to take post-secondary college courses for high school credit in accordance with the requirements governing dual enrollment contained in the applicable Student Handbook

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02(11)]

7.8 Correspondence or Online Courses

Credit for correspondence and online courses will be recognized if the conditions and criteria established by the Alabama Department of Education for such programs are met.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02(12, 13)]

7.9 Virtual School Option

7.9.1 Scope and Delivery of Services – The Board provides a virtual school option for grade 3-12 through programs deemed appropriate by the Superintendent.

7.9.2 Student Eligibility Criteria – Students must meet any eligibility requirements of the Alabama State Department of Education’s ACCESS program, if applicable. In addition, students must meet school system enrollment requirements for the course in question including, but not limited to, those contained in the school system’s curriculum catalog. The school system reserves the right to develop specific eligibility criteria for virtual courses.

In order to meet the requirements to be eligible to participate in the virtual education program, a student must:

- a. Meet all enrollment requirements as outlined in Board Policy and be enrolled in a Jackson County School;
- b. Have access to a computer and consistent access to the Internet;
- c. Maintain a minimum Grade Point Average of 2.0 for all courses taken during the academic year;
- d. Be deemed an appropriate candidate for the virtual program through the application process;
- e. Comply with the Jackson County Academic Integrity Policies; and
- f. Comply with the Jackson County Code of Conduct.

7.9.3 Removal from the Program – Students may be transitioned back to a traditional school program for the following reasons:

- a. The student fails to meet the attendance requirements for the virtual course(s);
- b. The student fails to make adequate academic progress due to participation in the virtual school program;
- c. The student fails to follow school district policies, procedures, rules and regulations, including but not limited to, the school district's rules pertaining to the use of its technology resources; or
- d. Upon the request of the student at the end of grading period, with the consent of parents/guardians.

In addition, students with discipline infractions resulting in suspension or expulsion may be removed from the virtual option.

7.9.4 Monitoring Performance and Testing Requirements – Individual student performance will be monitored pursuant to the school system's traditional academic credit requirements and grade scale.

Each student will be screened through the application process and a testing schedule will be developed by the program administrator. The testing schedule and testing requirements may be adjusted at the discretion of the administrator throughout the year. All semester examinations must be taken in the physical presence of a facilitator or teacher. The Virtual School Administrator will develop a plan to address the location of testing for each student. Scores earned on exams that are not taken through the approved testing plan developed by the Virtual School Administrator are not valid. Students must provide their own transportation to and from the testing site.

Students utilizing the virtual school option will be subject to all state testing and accountability requirements and will be subject to the same rules and regulations regarding the administration of such tests applicable to traditional public school students enrolled in the traditional public school. The Superintendent is hereby authorized to take whatever action may be necessary to facilitate the state testing and accountability requirements applicable to virtual school students. Students selecting the virtual school option will participate in state testing and accountability requirements on campus at a date and time selected by the school system.

Virtual school students are not eligible for semester exam exemptions.

7.9.5 Attendance –Students participating in the virtual school option are required to be active and submitting assignments in order to remain enrolled in the program.

The school system reserves the right to set specific attendance requirements for each virtual course. The Superintendent or his designee is authorized to develop alternate attendance policies for virtual courses, provided that students in such

programs are given notice of the attendance requirements. A student's failure to comply with such requirements may result in administrative action including, but not limited to, probation or removal from the class or a charge of truancy, if appropriate.

[Reference: Ala. Code §16-46A-1]

7.10 Career and Technical Education Programs

The Career and Technical Education Program (CTE) consists of areas of study that blend academic, occupational, and life skills. The CTE program will be administered in accordance with the requirements of the Alabama State Department of Education and the board.

7.10.1 Work-Based Learning Experience – A work-based learning experience provides students with educational opportunities in a work setting that typically cannot be obtained in a classroom and may include, but is not limited to, cooperative education, internships, clinical experiences, and other related opportunities. The Superintendent is authorized to develop guidelines and procedures in accordance with the regulations of the Alabama State Department of Education for work-based learning experiences to be conducted in the school system, including, but not limited to, guidelines for decision making and protocol for solving problems at the workplace and school.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-6-1-.04]

7.10.2 Live Work – Live work consists of work conducted by students that relates to the knowledge and skills taught as part of a CTE program of study, but is presented from outside the classroom. The Superintendent is authorized to develop for Board approval guidelines and procedures in accordance with the regulations of the Alabama State Department of Education and any applicable Business/Industry Certification requirements for live work to be conducted in the school system, including, but not limited to, a systematic method for managing live work, work requests and orders, and procedures for approval of where and for whom work may be conducted, school liability, and restrictions on live work. Any money collected for live work will be accounted for in accordance with the Board's Finance Manual.

7.10.3 Safety – To the extent practicable, reasonable safety procedures will be implemented in the Career and Technical Education program in accordance with Alabama State Department of Education regulations and any applicable Business/Industry Certification requirements.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-6-1-.04]

7.11 *Foreign Exchange Programs*

The Superintendent is authorized to develop guidelines and procedures, to be approved by the Board, under which foreign exchange students may attend Jackson County Schools, and Jackson County students may participate in foreign exchange programs.

7.12 *Extended Programs: Community Education*

Upon their approval by the Board, the Superintendent is authorized to implement programs and projects designed to meet the needs of the community served by the school system in accordance with any laws or regulations governing such programs.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-080-050]

7.13 *Graduation, Certificate of Completion, and Commencement*

In order to obtain an Alabama high school diploma, a student must earn the credits mandated by the applicable Alabama Administrative Code requirements and meet any other requirements mandated by state law or the Alabama State Department of Education.

A student with a disability (as defined by the IDEA) who has met the requirements provided by the Alabama Administrative Code or other applicable law will receive either a diploma or a graduation certificate as appropriate.

A student who has satisfactorily completed one of the above requirements is eligible to participate in graduation ceremonies as a member of the graduating class. Student participation in graduation-related ceremonies will be subject to the principal's approval and payment of outstanding financial obligations. Participation in a graduation-related ceremony may be prohibited by the principal if the student violates disciplinary standards or if, in the judgment of the principal, the student's participation could lead or contribute to disorder or disruption of the ceremony or activity.

7.13.1 Honors at Graduation – Students are eligible for honors at graduation in accordance with applicable standards developed by the local school principal or a committee appointed by the school system to develop such standards.

7.13.2 Fifth Year Seniors – Upon the recommendation of the counselor and approval of the principal, a student who has completed four full academic years of high school but who has not completed the required course work for graduation will be allowed to attend the number of class periods necessary to complete the courses required for graduation.

7.14 *School Wellness*

In furtherance of its commitment to fostering healthy nutritional and physical activities that support student achievement and that promote the development of lifelong wellness practices, the Board endorses the following programs, practices, and activities:

- 7.14.1 Nutrition Education and Promotion – Nutrition education that teaches the knowledge, skills, and values needed to develop healthy eating behaviors and nutrition promotion that promotes and reinforces student health will be integrated into the curriculum and offered throughout school campuses, including school dining areas and classrooms, by appropriately trained personnel.
- 7.14.2 Nutrition Standards and Guidelines – The Board will ensure that reimbursable school meals meet the program requirements and nutritional standards established by applicable state and federal regulations. The Board will encourage students to make nutritious food choices and will monitor all food and beverages sold or served to students, including those available outside federally regulated child nutrition programs. The Board will consider nutrient density and portion size before permitting food and beverages to be sold or served to students.
- 7.14.3 Physical Education and Physical Activity Opportunities – The Board will offer physical education opportunities that include the components of a sound physical education program. Physical education will equip students with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to maintain healthful lifelong physical activity. Physical education instruction will be aligned with the curriculum. All students will be provided the opportunity to participate regularly in supervised physical activities that are intended to maintain physical fitness and to impart the benefits of maintaining a physically active and healthy lifestyle.
- 7.14.4 Other School-Based Activities Designed to Promote Student Wellness – The Board may implement other programs that help create a school environment that conveys consistent wellness messages and that is conducive to healthy eating and physical activity.
- 7.14.5 Administrative Implementation – The Superintendent or designee is authorized to develop and implement more detailed administrative procedures that are designed to be implement this policy and to oversee the implementation and periodic review and update of the school system’s wellness policy and procedures based on input from teachers (including specialists in health and physical education), school nurses, parents and guardians, students, representatives of the school food service program, school board members, school administrators, and the public.

The Superintendent will report to the Board, as requested, on programs and efforts that are designed to meet the purpose and intent of this policy and will inform and update the public regarding the content and implementation of the wellness program. The Superintendent will ensure each local school’s compliance with the wellness policy and will measure periodically and make available to the public an assessment of the implementation of the wellness policy, including the extent to which schools are in compliance with the policy, the extent to which the policy compares to model policy and to describe the progress made in attaining the goals of the policy.

7.15 *Selection of Instructional Materials and Materials for the School Libraries*

The Superintendent is authorized to develop criteria for approval by the Board for selection of materials (other than textbooks) that are used in conjunction with student instruction and for circulation in school libraries. The American Library Association standards are followed for review of objections to instructional and library materials.

7.16 *Parental and Family Engagement*

In order to comply with the requirements of section 1116 of Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”), the Board will comply with the following requirements:

- 7.16.1 Joint Development of Required Plans –The school system will involve parents and family members in jointly developing the Board’s Title I, Part A plan, and the development of school support and improvement plans as required by the ESSA.
- 7.16.2 Coordination of Activities within the School System –The school system will provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist and build the capacity of all participating schools within the school system in planning and implementing effective parent and family involvement activities designed to improve student academic achievement and school performance. Such coordination may include meaningful consultation with employers, business leaders, and philanthropic organizations, or individuals with expertise in effectively engaging parents and family members in education.
- 7.16.3 Coordination with other Laws and Programs – The school system will coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies to the extent feasible and appropriate, with other relevant Federal, State, and local laws and programs.
- 7.16.4 Annual Evaluation – The school system will conduct, with the meaningful involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent and family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of all schools served under this part, including identifying—
 - a. Barriers to greater participation by parents/families in activities authorized by this section (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background);
 - b. The needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers; and
 - c. Strategies to support successful school and family interactions.

The school system will use the findings of the annual evaluation to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parental and family engagement, and

to revise, if necessary, the parent and family engagement policies described in this section.

- 7.16.5 Involvement of Parents/Family Members – The school system will involve parents in the activities of the schools, which may include establishing a parent advisory board comprised of a sufficient number and representative group of parents or family members served by the school system to adequately represent the needs of the population. This advisory board will help develop, revise, and review the parent and family engagement policy.

[Reference: 20 U.S.C.A. § 6318(a)(2)]

7.17 *Alabama Released Time Credit Act*

- 7.17.1 Alabama Released Time Credit Act – Pursuant to the *Alabama Released Time Credit Act*, school districts may offer released time classes and, in grades where credit is earned, award students elective credit for classes taken during the school day in released time programs.

"Released time" is defined by the Act as a period of time *during the school day* when a student is allowed to participate in an elective course in religious instruction, conducted *off school district property*, by a private entity.

7.17.2 Student Participation and Earned Credits –

3. A student may participate in released time elective courses if all requirements of the LEA's Released Time Program *and* all the following are satisfied:
 - f. The parent or guardian of the student gives written consent.
 - g. The sponsoring entity maintains attendance records and makes them available to the public school the student attends.
 - h. The sponsoring entity makes provisions for and assumes liability for the student who is excused for released time.
 - i. No public funds are expended other than de minimis administrative costs.
 - j. No public school personnel are involved in providing the religious instruction,
4. Elective course credit may be earned if the course content and curriculum are approved by the local board in accordance with the *Alabama Administrative Code* and other ALSDE guidelines.

7.17.3 Attendance –

4. No student may be released from a required core curriculum class to attend released time.
5. No student may be released more than six (6) hours per week to attend released time.
6. Student attendance in released time shall be calculated as part of the school day and subject to all normal attendance rules.

7.17.4 Transportation – Transportation to and from the place of released time, including transportation for any student with disabilities, is the complete responsibility of the sponsoring private entity, parent, guardian, or student and may not be arranged, coordinated, or provided for by public school personnel.

[Alabama Act. 2019-281]