



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

HUMAN RESOURCES AND PAYROLL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES August 2019-2020

**80 South Commerce Street
Hayneville, Alabama 36040
334-548-2131**

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Mr. Steve Foster, Vice President
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www.lowndesboe.org

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VISION

United in excellence to empower, engage, and educate while **creating pathways to success.**

MISSION

The mission of the Lowndes County Public Schools, in partnership with all stakeholders, is to prepare one student at a time to be culturally aware and ***fierce competitors on the economic world stage*** by providing rigorous and relevant instruction in a safe environment with high expectations.

GOALS

- Increase student achievement
- Improve all areas of Human Resources/Leadership (Recruit, Train, and Retain).
- Develop and sustain effective and efficient use of all resources for improved student achievement and fiscal responsibility.
- Provide and healthy learning environments.
- Increase parent and community involvement.

INTRODUCTION

This handbook is prepared by the Department of Human Resources solely as a guide to inform employees of some of the policies, procedures, and benefits of the Lowndes County Public Schools (LCPS). It outlines various employment policies, procedures, and practices that affect employees. It is intended only as a quick reference.

Although this manual is intended to explain specific procedures and practices of the Board, it does 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.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

The Lowndes County Public Schools System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. It provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person(s) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Mr. Darryl Washington, Title IX, and 504 Coordinator
(dWASHINGTON@lowndesboe.org)

Contact Information: 80 South Commerce Street, Hayneville, AL 36040
334-548-2131 (phone)
334-548-2161 (fax)

HUMAN RESOURCES INFORMATION & PROCEDURES

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

No person in the School District shall, on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, age, handicap, national origin or similar personal distinction be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in regard to employment, retention, promotion, transfer or dismissal in any educational program or activity which is under the jurisdiction of the Board. Inquiries regarding compliance and compliant procedures can be directed to:

Mrs. Kimberly Pruitt

Lowndes County Public Schools
80 South Commerce Street
Hayneville, Alabama 36040
334-548-2131

EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

All applicants must submit an online application, any required documents, and a copy of their diploma if applicable. An official transcript and a teaching certificate must also be provided if applying for a certified position. Upon recommendation to hire, all employees of the LCPS are subject to a background check through the State Department of Education and are required to be e-verified through the Department of Homeland Security.

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION AND PROCEDURES

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 adequately endorsed Alabama Teacher's Certificate, which will be maintained in their Human Resources file.

A teacher who has completed the certification process, but has not received the certificate, may be employed pending verification of the initiation of the certification process from the State Department of Education. The Human Resources Department may work closely with each teacher to expedite the process to obtain the certificate as soon as possible; however, it is ultimately the teacher's responsibility to ensure they achieve and maintain the proper certification for their position.

If a teacher earns a higher degree from a regionally accredited institution recognized by the State Department that merits increased compensation under the approved salary schedule, the salary increase will become effective following verification of the new degree or additional hours with an official transcript presented to the Human Resources office.

Professional Certification Reminders:

It is ultimately the employee's responsibility to maintain and renew a certificate. The following information is based on the system's understanding of the state's certification requirements and is provided for informational purposes only. Employees are responsible for independently verifying the current requirements to obtain or maintain their certificates.

- Any Provisional Certificate in a Teaching Field (PCTF) & Professional Certificate in Career & Technical Teaching Field (PCCT) applications must be received in the Teacher Certification Office at the Alabama Department of Education by October 1st of the application year. To request the 1st PCTF, the teacher must have already passed the Praxis subject area test and the ACT WorkKeys basic skills or passed the Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators by September 1st.
- Any first-year Interim Employment Certificate (IEC) and Provisional Certificate in Library Media or School Counseling (PCLS) applications for the current school year must be received in the Teacher Certification Office at the Alabama Department of Education each application year within four scholastic school years.
- An individual may not be employed for more than three years while holding a PCTF, IEC, PRE, or any combination thereof.
- If an employee is renewing an instructional leader/administrative certificate that expires on or after June 30, 2009, he or she must earn 5 PLU's (Professional Learning Units) regardless of his or her position or role in which they serve (2

must be ACLD approved).

- If an employee is renewing a teaching certificate that expires at the end of the five year period, he or she must earn 5 CEU's (50 hours of professional development). There is an additional option of 100 clock hours of allowable professional development from a prescribed list of providers.

SUBSTITUTES

Teachers

Substitute teachers are required to follow the policies and procedures outlined by Kelly Educational Staffing for Substitute Staff. Substitute teachers will use the AESOP system through Kelly Services to search and sign up for openings.

It shall be the responsibility of the principal and the regular teacher to ensure that the substitute teacher has the necessary instructions and materials to teach effectively, including textbooks, lesson plans, class rolls, schedules, and an outline of local school procedures. The substitute teacher shall provide the regular teacher with a brief report of the day's activities.

Support

It shall be the responsibility of the principal to ensure that the substitute support staff member has the necessary instructions and materials to effectively carry out assigned duties and an outline of local school procedures.

WORK VERIFICATION PROCEDURES

Verification of prior work experience must be obtained through the interview and hiring process. Employees are responsible for providing proper documentation of previous experience for purposes of placement on the salary schedule. The Human Resource Department will provide the necessary form to complete the verification process.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING PROCEDURES

In compliance with the Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991, as a condition of employment, the Lowndes County Board of Education reserves the right to test all employees who hold a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) who perform safety-sensitive functions for the presence of alcohol or illegal drugs in their system. The Board further reserves the right to require

all such employees to so submit to random alcohol and or tests to determine the presence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

RANDOM TESTING

The Board will conduct random unannounced screening of employees. Tests will be administered to employees for illegal drugs and controlled substances in a number equal to 1% greater than 50% of the workforce without advance notice in the first 12 months of testing. Tests of employees for alcohol will be conducted in a number equal to 1% greater than 25% of the affected workforce without advance notice in any given 12 month period. There will be no maximum number of samples that any one individual will be required to provide during the testing schedule. Subsequent testing will be conducted at levels equal to 1% greater than the initial testing schedule. Employees will be required to report to the Board designated collection site for testing as soon as possible but in no case later than 2 hours following notification. Annually, the tests will be spread reasonably over the 12 months. Testing dates and times are unannounced throughout the year.

Enforcement

As a condition of employment, the Lowndes County Board of Education reserves the right to require all designated employees (those who hold CDL and perform safety-sensitive functions) to submit to testing to determine the presence of prohibited substances as set forth herein.

Pursuant to Board policy and procedures, designated employees will undergo testing:

- At the time of initial employment
- When the Board or its trained designee has reasonable cause to believe a designated employee has violated its drug and alcohol policies
- On a random basis without advance notice
- Following any reportable accident--- Reportable defined as 1) involving a fatality or 2) the designated employee receives a moving citation and emergency medical treatment necessary away from scene or vehicle towed from the scene.

Violation of these rules, including testing positive, will subject the employee to discipline, up to and including discharge, in accordance with state and federal law.

The Lowndes County School System abides by and enforces the rules of the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 and all state laws that support a drug-free workplace. The unlawful manufacture,

distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance in the Board's workplace is prohibited. Any employee violating this policy is subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment. Any employee who gives or in any way transfers a controlled substance to another person or sells or manufactures a controlled substance while on the job or on or in Board property is subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment. Each employee is required by the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 to inform the Superintendent within five (5) days after he/she is convicted for a violation of any federal or state criminal drug statute where such violation occurred on School Board property. A conviction means a finding of guilt (including a plea of *nolo contendere*) or the imposition of a sentence by a Judge or jury in any federal or state court. If an employee is convicted of violating any criminal drug statute while in the workplace, he or she will be subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment. Alternatively, the Board may require the employee to finish successfully a drug abuse program sponsored by an approved private or governmental institution.

TECHNOLOGY

The primary goal of the technology environment is to support the educational and instructional endeavors of students and employees of Lowndes County Public Schools. The use of all technology resources is a privilege and not a right.

The Board permits restricted and conditional access to and use of its technology resources, including but not limited to computers, the "Internet," network storage areas, and electronic mail. Such access and use is restricted to employees, students, and other persons who are engaged in bona fide educational and administrative activities that serve and are consistent with identified educational objectives or authorized support functions, and who, by signing an "Acceptable Use Agreement," agree to abide by all Board policies, rules, and regulations regarding technology use. The Acceptable Use Agreement will be developed by the Superintendent and approved by the Board.

Employees who violate any Board policy, rule, or regulation regarding technology use may be denied use of the Board's technology resources and may be subject to additional disciplinary action. All technology resources, including network and Internet resources, e-mail systems, and computers or other access devices owned, leased, or maintained by the Board, are the sole property of the Board. Board personnel may, at any time and without prior notice, access, search, examine, inspect, collect, or retrieve information of any kind from the Board's technology

resources, including computer or related equipment, files, and data, to determine if a user violates any of the Board's policies, rules, and regulations regarding access to and use of technology resources, for or in connection with any other matter or reason related to the safe and efficient operation or administration of the school system, or for any other purpose not prohibited by law. Users of school system technology resources have no personal right of privacy or confidentiality with respect to the use or content of such.

Any questions about this policy, its interpretation, or specific circumstances shall be directed to the Coordinator of Technology before proceeding.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Lowndes County Board of Education believes they have a vital interest in the rehabilitation of its employees who may be addicted to alcohol and drugs. An employee is permitted to use his/her sick leave for an approved alcohol/substance abuse rehabilitation program. The Superintendent, SAP, and employee will agree on an approved rehabilitation program.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

It is the policy of the Board and all departments thereof to prevent sexual harassment and to guard against any occurrence that remotely resembles this illegal act. Sexual harassment lowers morale and is damaging to the work environment. Therefore, the Board will treat sexual harassment like any other form of employee misconduct: it will not be tolerated.

I. SEXUAL HARASSMENT DEFINED

“Sexual harassment” is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- a. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment; or
- b. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by any individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting an individual; or
- c. The purpose or effect of such conduct is to interfere with the individual's work performance unreasonably or to create a hostile or abusive work environment.

II. IDENTIFICATION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT Sexual harassment may occur in a variety of forms. Four categories of sexual harassment and some concrete examples of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment, if unwelcome, are:

- a. VERBAL – unwelcome words of a sexual nature directed at another, including making sexual demands or sexual propositions, anatomy; catcalls; whistles; demeaning name-calling; remarks on the intimate details of one's life or sexual likes or preferences; and if unwelcome, invitations for lunch, dinner, drinks, or dates.
- b. VISUAL – unwelcome exposure to visible objects such as sexually explicit pictures, photos, drawings, cartoons, magazines, objects, or posters (including poster calendars); sexually obscene gestures or obvious staring; and nudity.
- c. WRITTEN – notes or letters of sexual content or propositions; sexually-explicit literature, poems, or magazine articles; and obscene words, phrases or graphics on walls, bulletin boards, or posters.
- d. PHYSICAL – unwelcome physical contact with another, including touching, hugging, kissing, patting, fondling, grabbing, rubbing, pinching, and in some instances, close physical positioning.

This list does not include all the possible behavior which could be viewed as sexually harassing by the Board and which could result in job discipline. It is merely a list of offensive behaviors. Other behavior might be viewed as being sexually harassing, depending on the circumstances and frequency in which they occur. In addition, some of the behavior on the list might not, in all circumstances, be sexually harassing, only unwelcome sexual conduct is unlawful.

III. WHO CAN BE INVOLVED IN SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment can occur in a wide variety of circumstances and may encompass many variables. It is important to realize that:

- Victims can be of either gender (male or female);
- Harassers may be supervisors of victims, but harassers may also be co-workers or even non-employees;
- Harassers and victims need not be of the opposite gender if the conduct is still based upon sex;
- Victims may be third-party observers, affected by the behavior of others and exposed to a hostile or abusive atmosphere based upon sex;
- Victims need not suffer any financial loss;

- The sexual harassment need not seriously affect a victim’s psychological well-being or lead the victim to suffer injury; instead, conduct or an environment based upon sex that a reasonable person would and does believe to be hostile or abusive constitutes sexual harassment.

IV. If you are subjected to sexual harassment, register a complaint with your superiors

All building administrators and other supervisory personnel have an affirmative obligation to prevent and eliminate sexual harassment. Those persons shall immediately intervene to remedy sexual harassment in our working and learning environments independent or receipt of a complaint. Individuals who have knowledge of the occurrence of sexual harassment within his/her chain of command or in the buildings for which he/she has responsibility shall immediately report such offense to the Title IX Coordinator.

Any employee of the Board who feels they have been subjected to sexual harassment should register their complaint with the superior next in charge. In the unlikely event that all of the supervisors or the employee is believed to be involved in sexual harassment, the employee should register their complaint with the Superintendent. Likewise, if an employee believes that the Superintendent is involved in the sexual harassment, the complaint should be made to the Chairperson of the Board.

The sexual harassment complaint may initially be made verbally by talking to the appropriate supervisor. The complaint will then have to be put in writing, signed, and dated by the person complaining. An employee may write their own complaint, or if you wish, the supervisor with whom you spoke will help you write up your complaint of sexual harassment.

No information concerning the complaint will be released to their party persons or to anyone within the school system except those having a “need to know information.

V. Prompt investigation of complaint

The Board shall thoroughly, impartially, and promptly investigate any sexual harassment complaint filed by one of its employees. A special investigator will be in charge of these investigations to ensure a thorough investigation and to assist in maintaining the confidentiality of the matter.

VI. Confidential report of investigation

The special investigator will timely file a confidential written report of the result of the investigation to either the Superintendent or to the Board Chairperson, depending on the situation

at hand. Also, the complaint will be promptly informed that the accused harasser acted in a manner to sexually harass the complaint, the accused employee will also receive a copy of the special investigator's report.

VII. Prompt remedial action

The Board will take prompt action to end any sexual harassment that, in fact occurred; the Board shall take immediate steps to discipline the offending employee or employees. Tenured professional employees and support employees with permanent status have the same right to due process when charged with sexual harassment as with any other adverse action.

VIII. Right to rebuttal

Both the complaining employee and the employee who has been accused of sexual harassment have the right to submit facts, documents or other evidence contesting or supporting the report of the investigator, to the Superintendent of the Board if the circumstances so dictate and have a due process hearing as required by the teacher tenure law and fair dismissal law.

IX. Retaliation prohibited

No employee of the Board shall discharge or otherwise discriminate or harass any other Board employee who has filed a complaint of sexual harassment under this policy or who has sought redress for sexual harassment with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission by instituting an action in Court.

X. Intentional false reporting

Employees who knowingly fabricate allegations of sexual harassment shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The Board shall take all appropriate steps to inform all employees of the Board of the contents of this policy. The Board encourages employees to come forward if there is a complaint of sexual harassment. Each employee shall be assured that no retaliatory action will be taken or allowed against any employee who asserts a sexual harassment complaint. An opportunity for the Board to assist any employee does not exist if a complaint is not made to the employee's supervisor.

EMPLOYEE ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

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. Employees are expected to have a record of hours worked; therefore, all employees are required to utilize the Time Clock or Time Sheet at his/her work location as directed.

EMPLOYEE ABSENCES – Kelly Educational Staffing / Aesop

When an employee needs to be absent from work, some are required to enter absences in Aesop, and all other employees must notify their immediate supervisor and building administrator.

Please verify with the building administrator/supervisor, which employee groups must utilize the Aesop service. It is the employee's responsibility to register an absence when he/she will not be reporting to work or notify the building administrator/supervisor of the absence. Additional questions can be addressed to Kelly Educational Staffing at 334-272-6522 or call the Human Resources Office at 334-548-2131. In the event an employee must leave work in the middle of the day, he or she must notify an administrator who will arrange coverage.

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 of absence will not count 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.

Except as otherwise authorized under Board policy, employees may be absent from work only in the following circumstances:

SICK LEAVE:

Sick leave is defined as the absence from regular duty by an employee because of the following:

1. Personal illness;
2. Bodily injury which incapacitates the employee;
3. Death in the immediate family of the employee (husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, nephew, niece, granddaughter, grandson, grandfather, grandmother, uncle and aunt);
4. Where unusual strong personal ties exist because of an employee's having been supported or educated by a person of some relationship other than those listed, this

responsibility may be recognized for leave purposes. In such cases the employee shall file with the Board a written statement of the circumstances which justify an exception to the general rule;

5. Attendance to an ill member of the immediate family (husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister) of the employee or a person standing in loco parentis;

In no cases shall sick leave be used until it has been earned, except as may otherwise be provided by policies governing sick leave banks.

An employee shall earn one (1) sick leave day per month of employment. An employee shall be allowed to accumulate an unlimited number of sick leave days. Upon proper verification of the previous employing Board, personnel employed by the Board may transfer sick leave from another Alabama school district.

Employees may convert accumulated sick leave to creditable months of service upon service retirement.

Employees must notify the principal/supervisor at least one day prior to taking sick leave, although it is recognized that advance notification may not always be possible.

Certified personnel must take sick leave in one-half or one-day increments. Support personnel must take sick leave in one hour, one-half, or one-day increments.

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

The Board complies with the federal Family Medical Leave Act. The Act applies to all board employees who have been employed by the Board for at least 12 months and who worked for at least 1,250 hours during those 12 months. Under the Act, an eligible employee is entitled to 12 weeks of unpaid leave during a 12-month period for the following reasons:

1. The birth and first-year care of a child.
2. The adoption or foster placement of a child.
3. The care of "serious health condition."

The Board may allow or require that paid leave is taken before granting unpaid leave. Unpaid leave granted in compliance with the Act, when combined with paid leave available to an employee, shall not exceed a combined total of 12 weeks. In the instance of birth, adoption, and foster placement, the entitlement to leave for childcare expires at the end of the 12-month period

beginning on the date of birth or placement. Entitlement for leave associated with the illness of a child occurs only where the child is under 18 years of age or incapable of self-care due to mental or physical disability. In cases where the Board employs both spouses, the combined amount of leave for childbirth, adoption, and foster placement or to care for a sick parent is limited to 12 weeks.

VACATION LEAVE

- a. All personnel who are employed on a twelve (12) month basis are entitled to ten (10) vacation days per year. Vacation days may be accumulated up to twenty (20) days.
- b. Vacation shall be earned by the month and accountable by the year, July 1 through June 30, up to (10) days. One vacation day will be earned for each month of employment up to ten (10) days.
- c. Employees must notify the principal/supervisor at least one day prior to taking vacation leave, although it is recognized that advance notification may not always be possible.
- d. Certified personnel must take vacation leave in one-half or one-day increments. Support personnel must take vacation leave in one hour, one-half, or one-day increments.
- e. All vacation days must be used prior to an effective resignation or retirement date. The school district shall not make cash payments for unused vacation days.

PERSONAL LEAVE

Each employee shall be entitled to two (2) days of non-cumulative paid personal leave annually, to be granted upon the request of the employee. The following provisions shall apply:

1. It is suggested that personal leave days not be taken during the first or last two (2) weeks of school, or immediately before or after a holiday unless special permission is granted by the principal/supervisor with the approval of the Superintendent.
2. The Board will pay the first two (2) personal leave days granted. The Board (upon written request of the employee to the Superintendent) may grant three (3) additional days with a salary deduction at the rate of one (1) day's substitute pay for each day.
3. Employees must notify the principal/supervisor at least one day prior to taking personal leave, although it is recognized that advance notification may not always be possible.
4. The paid personal leave days may be taken during any month of the school term. An employee who serves only one semester/term with pay shall be entitled to only one (1)

day of personal leave, while the additional one (1) day of personal leave would be available to the person replacing the employee.

5. The employee may choose to convert personal leave to sick leave days at the end of the school year. Only those unused or reimbursed personal leave days that are funded by the state or the Board shall be eligible for conversion to sick leave days. Notification to convert the unused days to sick leave must be made on the form provided by the principal/supervisor.
6. No employee shall be required to divulge his/her reasons for requesting personal leave.
7. Certified personnel must take personal leave in one-half or one-day increments. Support personnel must take personal leave in one hour, one-half, or one-day increments.

PROFESSIONAL LEAVE

Upon written request by the employee and approval by the Superintendent, professional leave may be granted for the purpose of attending national, regional, state, or local meetings, which, in the judgment of the Superintendent, serve the needs and interests of the school system.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Certified personnel are eligible for and may be granted leaves of absence at the discretion of the Board. If leave is granted, certain employment rights of the employee continue as if he/she were in regular employment. The employee is entitled, upon completion of the leave, to return to the school and position occupied when leave was granted unless transferred by the Board under the provisions of Chapter 24 of The Code of Alabama. Leaves of absence shall be without pay and in accordance with laws of the Alabama Teacher Retirement System; leave time will not count for retirement purposes. A leave of absence does not impair the tenure status of the employee. The causes for which leaves of absence may be granted are:

Study

Illness

Pregnancy

Teaching abroad

Military Service

Other Good and Just Causes

Leaves of absence are typically granted for a period of time not to exceed one (1) year; however, if in the opinion of the Board there is valid reason(s), such leave may be extended for one (1) additional year.

COMPENSATORY LEAVE

The Board may, under an agreement with an employee covered by the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act, award compensatory time (leave) instead of overtime pay. Such agreement or understanding relative to compensatory time must be reached between the Board and an affected employee before the performance of any work subject to overtime pay or compensatory time (leave). Additionally, approval must be requested and received in writing from the Superintendent prior to any overtime work being performed.

Compensatory time (leave) may be taken in 15-minute increments.

MILITARY LEAVE

All employees are entitled to military leave of absences when ordered to active duty for training as members of the Alabama National Guard or any component of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Employees who volunteer, are drafted, or are ordered to extended active duty with any component of the U.S. Armed forces, shall be entitled to reinstatement to their former positions or comparable positions.

Military Leave for Training or Short Term Duty

Employees who are required to attend annual summer training or special active duty for training shall not suffer any loss of salary during the first twenty-one (21) of such absence in any calendar year. Employees must notify the principal/supervisor immediately upon receipt of orders for service. Employees who are ordered for such duty shall provide a copy of the orders with an original letter from the commanding officer or designee to the Superintendent. Such leave will be without loss of benefits. Such arrangements shall apply to "military call-ups."

Reinstatement to Positions after Extended Duty

Employees who volunteer, are drafted, or are called to active duty for extended periods, will be placed on "Military Leave Absence" upon written application of such employees and be entitled to reinstatement to their former or comparable positions upon return under the conditions that follow:

1. They must not have remained on active duty beyond their first opportunity for honorable release; and
2. They must report to claim reimbursement within ninety (90) days after completion of such service {31 days in case of individuals who undergo only six (6) months training or less}.

JURY SERVICE/COURT APPEARANCE

Employees may be excused without loss of pay for serving as a witness under subpoena in a court of law. Employees must notify the principal/supervisor immediately upon receipt of a subpoena for service. Employees must present a copy of the subpoena to the principal/supervisor. Employees required to attend court as a result of criminal or disorderly acts, being a party (plaintiff or defendant) in a case, employment outside of the school district, or holding a public office or position may be exempted from consideration under this policy.

Employees shall be excused without loss of pay for *jury service*. Employees must notify the principal/supervisor immediately upon receipt of a subpoena for service. Employees must present a copy of the subpoena to the principal/supervisor. Employees are expected to return to work when released from jury service.

Election Duty

Employees may be excused without loss of pay for serving as an election official under subpoena from election officers. Employees must notify the principal supervisor immediately upon receipt of a subpoena for service. Employees required to serve as a result of employment outside of the school district or holding a public office or position may be exempted from consideration under the school district or holding a public office or position may be exempted from consideration under this policy.

ON THE JOB INJURY LEAVE PROCEDURES

Any accident or injury to the employee occurring during the performance of duties or when directed or requested by the employer to be on the property of the employer, which prevents the employee from working or returning to his/her job, is an on-the-job injury.

The following regulations, procedures, and rights are established pertaining to employees who are injured on the job:

- I. The employee must provide notice of the injury to the Superintendent and principal/immediate supervisor within twenty-four (24) hours of the accident. The injured employee or another person may make the notice.
- II. The employer may require medical certification from the employee's physician. The employer may require a second opinion at the expense of the School District.
- III. The salary of the injured employee must be continued for a period of up to ninety (90) working days.
- IV. The employer may extend the ninety (90) day sick leave period for on-the-job injuries at the discretion of the Board.
- V. Any unreimbursed medical expenses and costs that the employee incurs as a result of an on-the-job injury may be filed for reimbursement with the State Board of Adjustment.
- VI. Sick leave shall not be deducted from an employee's account if absence from work is the result of an on-the-job injury.
- VII. The employer must inform the employee of his/her right to go before the State Board of Adjustment.
- VIII. The School District can grant additional vacation days and leaves of absences.

SICK LEAVE BANK

A. Purpose

The purpose of the Sick Leave Bank, hereafter referred to as the SLB, is to provide sick leave to depositors of the bank after they have exhausted their accumulated sick leave and, more specifically, to provide such leave from the bank in cases of catastrophic illnesses.

B. The Sick Leave Bank Committee

The SLB Committee shall consist of five (5) employees, one (1) representing the Board, and four (4) representing the participating members of the SLB. At the beginning of each scholastic year, an election shall be held among the SLB members to determine by secret ballot the four (4) members to serve on the SLB Committee. The term of office shall be one (1) year. The Superintendent shall be responsible for conducting the election in a fair and equitable manner, ensuring the confidentiality of the secret balloting process. The Superintendent shall also appoint the Board's representative on the SLB Committee, subject to the approval of the Board.

Duties of the SLB Committee:

It shall be the exclusive responsibility of the SLB Committee to write the guidelines and administrative procedures of the SLB, including the catastrophic leave provisions. It shall also be the SLB Committee's duty to develop all necessary forms for the orderly operation and administration of the SLB. To ensure the orderly transfer and acceptance of catastrophic sick leave days from one SLB to another, the State Board of Education shall provide a uniform state form.

C. Eligibility and Participation in the Sick Leave Bank

Each SLB's guidelines shall include the following regulations:

1. No employee shall be allowed to owe more than 15 days to the SLB, unless over fifty (50) percent of the SLB members vote to extend the limit.
2. Appropriate administrative forms for administering the SLB shall be developed by the SLB Committee.

D. Repayment of Loaned Days

1. Sick leave days shall be repaid to the SLB monthly as re-earned by the member. Upon the resignation or termination of an employee who has an outstanding loan of sick leave days, the value of the loan shall be deducted from the final paycheck at the employee's prevailing rate of pay.
2. Employee membership in the SLB shall be voluntary.
3. The SLB Committee shall investigate any alleged abuse of the use of the SLB. On the finding of wrongdoing, the member shall repay all of the sick leave credits drawn from the SLB and be subject to other appropriate disciplinary action as determined by the Board.

Retirement - Upon retirement or transfer of the SLB member, days on deposit with the SLB shall be withdrawn and transferred with the employee or made accessible for retirement credit, as applicable.

E. Catastrophic Sick Leave

Before being eligible to use catastrophic sick leave days, the SLB member shall first borrow and utilize days from the SLB, up to a maximum of fifteen (15) days. However, if the member later

qualifies for catastrophic sick leave, donated catastrophic sick leave days may be used to repay days owed to the SLB to the credit of the affected member.

At the beginning of the scholastic year, or upon employment of a new employee, as the case may be, the appropriate number of sick leave days shall, upon application of the employee that does not have the minimum number of sick leave days, enable him/her to join the SLB. The SLB Committee shall develop in its guidelines a provision whether or not to allow other employees who have previously failed or refused to join the SLB the option to join upon the prerequisite number of sick leave days. Any policy developed by the SLB Committee shall be uniformly applied to all members.

Employees, at their discretion, may donate a specific number of days to the SLB to be designated for a particular employee for use against catastrophic illness. A catastrophic illness, injury, or pregnancy or medical condition related to childbirth, certified by a licensed physician, which causes the employee to be absent from work for an extended period of time. A donating employee shall not be required to donate a minimum number of catastrophic days to the SLB. The recipient employee may use catastrophic sick leave days for himself/herself or other covered persons, as provided in the Code of Alabama, Section 16-1-18.1. Before sick leave days for a catastrophic illness may be used by a recipient employee, the recipient employee shall first exhaust all sick and personal leave. Donated days shall become available for use by the particular employee who shall not be required to repay the days. Any employee who donates sick leave days to the SLB for a particular employee suffering from a catastrophic illness shall be clearly informed that the donated days are not to be recovered or returned to the donor. If a particular employee does not require all of the days donated to the credit of the employee, the days shall revert to the credit of those employees who donated the days in accordance with the guidelines adopted by the SLB Committee. No employee may donate more than thirty (30) sick leave days to the SLB for the catastrophic sick leave of any one employee. A SLB is authorized to donate sick leave days to another SLB for use by an employee who is suffering a catastrophic illness. An employee must be a member of the SLB to donate or receive catastrophic sick leave days.

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

General Complaints and Grievances:

It is the policy of the Board to reduce, as much as possible, the potential area of grievances; to assure each employee the opportunity for an orderly presentation and review of grievances; to establish and maintain appropriate channels of communication between the staff and administration, and to resolve each grievance at the most immediate level of administration.

It shall be understood that the Board is the final authority in all matters pertaining to grievances unless an employee should desire to redress through the courts or utilize appeal procedures as established by Law.

Americans with Disabilities Act Complaint Procedures

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 complaints 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.

PAYROLL GUIDE

The Superintendent shall prepare or cause to be prepared salary schedules for all personnel employed by the School District. The salary schedules shall be presented to the Board for review and approval.

Payroll Procedures

The Board delegates payroll preparation for the payment of employee salaries to the Superintendent or his designee. The payroll shall be in accordance with the salary guidelines approved by the Board and any rules or regulations promulgated by the State Superintendent of Education.

New authorizations for deductions of dues, voluntary contributions, or employee savings plans must be submitted to the payroll office, and deductions shall begin with the pay period next following the receipt of authorization.

Salary Deductions

The Board will make salary deductions, which are considered statutory, including federal income tax, state income tax, retirement, etc., in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

The Board will make salary deductions when employees or groups of employees request such deductions. The deductions shall be made from salaries earned in at least nine different pay periods and shall be remitted to the appropriate recipient as specified by the employees within 10 days following each deduction.

Deductions made for employee organizations shall be made based upon membership lists and forms provided by the respective organizations. These lists shall be corrected, updated, and returned to the respective organizations not later than November 10th of each school year.

Voluntary deductions shall be made from the membership lists unless an employee revokes authorization for such deductions by providing a 30-day written notice of revocation.

New authorization for payroll deductions may be added at any time. Upon termination, amounts owed under the authorization of an employee shall be deducted from an employee's final pay due. When amounts have been correctly deducted and remitted by the Board, the Board shall bear no further responsibility or liability for further transactions. The Board shall not be liable for any error while acting in good faith to make the subject deductions.

DIRECT DEPOSIT

The Lowndes County Board of Education requires all employees to participate in direct deposit of payroll checks. Forms for indicating the banking institution, employee account number, and other necessary information shall be available through the payroll department. Employees participating in direct deposit receive a statement showing gross pay, itemized deductions, and net pay. Payments that are not directly deposited are mailed to the employee's home address of record or delivered by other means as directed by the Superintendent. All pay statements can be retrieved from the Employee Self-Service website at <http://10.10.1.15/employeeselfservice>.

HEALTH BENEFIT–2019-2020

Welcome to PEEHIP!

Our website and your **PEEHIP Member Handbook** provide a comprehensive introduction to your employment benefits and will help you make informed decisions about which health insurance coverages are right for you and your family.

IMPORTANT OPEN ENROLLMENT DATES

- **Open Enrollment begins July 1, 2019, and will end by the following deadlines:**
Online: September 10, 2019. Open Enrollment ends midnight September 10, 2019. After this time, online Open Enrollment changes will not be accepted, and the Open Enrollment link will be closed.
- **Online enrollment is the preferred option because it is the easiest and most efficient method to enroll in or make changes to your coverage.** No other enrollment method provides a confirmation page in real-time, giving you instant assurance PEEHIP has received your enrollment request.

- **Paper: August 31, 2019.** Open Enrollment ends August 31, 2019. Any paper forms postmarked after that date will not be accepted, without exception.
- **Flexible Spending Accounts: September 30, 2019.** Both paper and online Open Enrollment for flex plans end September 30, 2019.

Enroll now using [Member Online Services](#)

EFFECTIVE DATE OF COVERAGE

- All Open Enrollment coverage elections approved by PEEHIP will become effective **October 1, 2019**.
- **Member Handbook with Open Enrollment Information** - effective October 1, 2019

HELPFUL INFORMATION ABOUT OPEN ENROLLMENT

- **You do not need to do anything during Open Enrollment if you are satisfied with your current coverage***. If you take no action, you and your covered dependents will remain on your current plan(s).
- ***Exception:** If you want to renew your Flexible Spending Accounts or Premium Assistance (PAA) Discount, you must re-enroll each year as these programs do not automatically renew. For more information about the Premium Assistance Discount, visit our [Premium Assistance](#) page.

THE WELLNESS PROGRAM

PEEHIP is working with ActiveHealth and the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) to provide members with the Team Up for Health wellness program. This confidential and secure health and wellness benefit offers free services for members and their covered spouses to help them live happier, healthier, and more satisfying lives.

Healthier members typically get sick less often and visit the doctor less frequently. This leads to lower healthcare costs for our members and the plan while providing an invaluable benefit to members.

TEACHER RETIREMENT SYSTEM

TIER 1 EMPLOYEES

All full-time employees are eligible and required to participate in the State Retirement Program. For employees hired prior to January 1, 2013, seven and a half percent of the employee's salary is deducted each month for retirement, and all contributions belong to the employee.

Ten years of creditable service are required for an employee to become "vested" or eligible for benefits. Persons terminating their employment with less than 10 years of service must withdraw their retirement funds within 5 years of termination.

A person hired prior to January 1, 2013, may retire after 25 years of service or at the age of 60 (if vested) and may use accumulated sick leave in determining the amount of creditable service.

Retirement benefits will be calculated on the annual salary of the highest 3 of the last 10 years of service.

TIER 2 EMPLOYEES

Employees hired January 1, 2013, or later will pay six percent to the retirement system, and their retirement benefits will be calculated at a lower percentage than current employees. Benefits will be calculated on the annual salary of the highest 3 of the last 5 years of service.

The retirement age requirement for employees hired January 1, 2013, or later will be 62 (if vested) or 30 years of service. An employee may not use accumulated sick leave in determining the amount of creditable service.

TRS DEATH BENEFITS

Death benefits are also provided through the Teacher Retirement Program and depend on years of service and age. For example, persons under 60 years of age with from 1 to 25 years of service will receive death benefits consisting of their total retirement contributions and total earned interest plus an amount equal to the previous year's salary.

DEFERRED COMPENSATION PLANS

403B - Under this plan, employees may contribute as much as \$18,000 (2018) of pre-tax income to an annuity each year. The contribution is automatically deducted from their paychecks.

By investing money in this way before taxes are paid, employees can reduce their current income tax burden. It is permissible to transfer accumulated funds, with no dollar limit, to other qualified IRA annuity plans.

Once such an investment is made, the interest or dividends earned are only taxed as funds are withdrawn. Since the withdrawals are usually made after retirement when the participant is likely to be in a lower tax bracket, less tax is paid, and funds accumulate faster.

Lincoln Financial offers Educator investment options.

RSA-1 - Using this plan, employees may elect to delay receiving a portion of their salary (may not exceed--if more than one 457 plan, combined deferrals must not exceed--\$18,500 (2018) or \$24,500 (2018) for employees age 50 or over) until some later determined date, usually after retirement.

The deferred income, which accumulates interest in a special fund, is not subject to federal income tax until distributed to the employee.

RSA-1 funds will be invested in the same type of investments and are subject to the same guidelines and limitations as applicable to investments made by the Teacher Retirement System.

FLEXIBLE SPENDING PLAN

A flexible spending plan is a way to provide employees valuable benefits and tax savings. Benefits under an eligible plan may include reimbursement of dependent care expenses and medical expenses such as co-payments and deductibles.

Also, most importantly, you always pay insurance premiums with pre-tax dollars. All full-time employees are eligible to participate in this plan, which gives them the opportunity to recognize additional monthly income through pre-tax savings.

OPEN ENROLLMENT

- The open enrollment deadline for the Flexible Spending Accounts is September 30th, for an effective date of October 1st.
- Plan deductions start on the October payroll check. Deductions end with the September payroll check for the following year.

All deductions are processed over 12 months.

The Flexible Spending Account is administered through PEEHIP that is offered through BC/BS of Alabama. Below is the website address:

<https://www.rsa-al.gov/index.php/members/peehip/flex-account/>

Reimbursement of over-the-counter drugs from the Health Care FSA will be prohibited due to the Federal Reform Act unless you have a doctor's prescription for the drug.

**Contacts for Lowndes County Public Schools
District Office**

Name	Title	Department	Extension
Baity, Teresa	CNP Clerk	Operations	1112
Burroughs, Jason	Superintendent	Office of Superintendent	1012
Bus Shop	Transportation	Transportation	70001
Davis, Texana	Accounting/Finance	Office of Business & Fiscal Affairs	1118
Fair, Kenneth	Director of Operations	Operations	1700
Foster, Nancy	Local School Accounting Clerk/Secretary	Office of Business & Fiscal Affairs	1106
Fountain, Freda	Receptionist	Human Resources	1000
Hollins, Ed.D, Renata	Director of Fed. Programs & Special Education	Federal Programs	1200
Hyde, Audrey	Payroll Clerk	Human Resources	1406
Jeter, Samita	Director of Head Start	Head Start	12001
Logan, Vanessa	Purchasing Agent	Office of Business & Fiscal Affairs	1712
Martin, Tiffany	Psychometrist	Federal Programs	1213
Mathews, Ed.D, Benitha	Director of Technology/Supervisor of Library Media	Office of Technology Initiative	1600
Means, Harvey	Director of Transportation & Student Services	Operations	1316
Patterson, Yvette	Administrative Assistant to Superintendent	Office of Superintendent	1006
Pruitt, Kimberly	Director of Human Resources	Human Resources	1400
Reid, Yolanda	Chief of Finance	Office of Business and Fiscal Affairs	1100
Rudolph, Kizzy	Administrative Assistant	Federal Programs	1706
Washington, Darryl	Director of Curriculum and Instruction	Federal Programs	1300

