

# UNION COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

2015-2016

## EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



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## **CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION**

The Union County School District is dedicated to providing the very best education for our students. Each employee contributes directly to the success of the educational programs and the organization's growth and success. We hope that you will take pride in being a member of our team of educational professionals.

This handbook has been prepared to inform you of policies and procedures that effect your employment with the Union County School District. It is important that you read this document and keep it as a reference during the coming year. However, the handbook cannot anticipate every situation or answer every question about employment.

The information, policies, and benefits described here are subject to change. The employee handbook is not a contract of employment or a legal document. It is not a guarantee of any rights, benefits, or entitlement.

If you have any questions, please contact your principal or supervisor. If they are unable to assist you, they will give you direction as to which person or department at the district level is responsible for the issue in question. You may always contact the Personnel Department for any questions that you have regarding employment policies.

The School Board Policies are also available to all employees for more detailed information and a complete set of the district's rules, regulations, and policies. Please visit the district's web site at [www.union.state.fl.us](http://www.union.state.fl.us) to view these policies.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Union County School District is to provide a learning environment where students, staff, parents and community excel

### **VISION STATEMENT**

The vision of the Union County School District is to become a foundation of educational excellence for all

# UNION COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

## **DISTRICT 1**

Allen Parrish  
105 NE 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Lake Butler, FL 32054  
Home (386) 496-1371  
Cell (386) 867-2925

## **DISTRICT 2**

Alvin Griffis  
12207 NE County Road 793  
Raiford, FL 32083  
Home (386) 431-1536  
Cell (904) 966-9312

## **DISTRICT 3**

Curtis Clyatt  
P. O. Box 180  
Worthington Springs, FL 32697  
Home (386) 496-1946  
Cell (386) 867-2953

## **DISTRICT 4**

Becky Raulerson  
P. O. Box 674  
Lake Butler, FL 32054  
Home (386) 496-2489  
Cell (386) 547-3409

## **DISTRICT 5**

Terra Johnson  
13682 NW 76<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Lake Butler, FL 32054  
Home (386) 496-1677  
Cell (386) 623-2644

## **SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS**

The Union County School Board Meetings are held in the District School Board Room on the second Tuesday of the month beginning at 6:00 p.m. and on the fourth Tuesday of the month beginning at 1:30 p.m. School Board Meetings are advertised and open to the public. A copy of the School Board Meeting Schedule is posted on our website at [www.union.k12.fl.us](http://www.union.k12.fl.us).

## DISTRICT DIRECTORY

**DISTRICT OFFICE**  
**55 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**Lake Butler, FL 32054**

**386-496-2045**

### **SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

Carlton Faulk, Superintendent  
Cathy Sams, Executive Secretary

386-496-2045 ext. 227  
386-496-2045 ext. 227

### **PERSONNEL AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Barry Sams, Director  
Cindy Howell, Personnel Specialist  
Pam Pittman, Secretary / Bookkeeper

386-496-1300  
386-496-2045 ext. 228  
386-496-2045 ext. 230

### **FINANCE**

Renae Prevatt, Finance Director  
Cindy Maddox, Secretary  
Cailyn Stalnaker, Accountant  
Pat Cunningham, Budget Analyst  
Mary Ann Taylor, Accounts Payable Specialist  
Brenda Suggs, Payroll Specialist

386-496-2045 ext. 223  
386-496-2045 ext. 238  
386-496-2045 ext. 236  
386-496-2045 ext. 222  
386-496-2045 ext. 224  
386-496-2045 ext. 225

### **EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION AND STUDENT SERVICES**

Christie Whitehead, Director  
Brenda Croft, Secretary

386-496-2045 ext. 231  
386-496-2045 ext. 239

### **CURRICULUM AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Linda Johns, Director  
Marie Pittman, Secretary

386-496-4884  
386-496-2045 ext. 232

### **MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM**

Lanier Clyatt, Information Services Manager

386-496-2045 ext. 233

### **TECHNOLOGY**

Adam Boatright, Technology Specialist  
Mike Fletcher, Technology Technician

386-496-2045 ext. 242  
386-496-2045 ext. 242

### **FOOD SERVICE**

Betsy Whitehead, Food Service Specialist  
Kaitlin Tomlinson, Secretary / Bookkeeper

386-496-2045 ext. 234  
386-496-2045 ext. 235

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Mike Pittman, Transportation Specialist

386-496-2182

### **TIGER'S DEN DAYCARE**

C. C. Box, Daycare Specialist

386-496-1200

# SCHOOLS

**LAKE BUTLER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**386-496-3047**

800 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lake Butler, FL 32054  
Stacey Rimes, Principal  
Marcie Tucker, Assistant Principal

**LAKE BUTLER MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**386-496-3046**

150 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lake Butler, FL 32054  
Carolyn Parrish, Principal  
Steve Hoard, Assistant Principal

**UNION COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL**

**386-496-3040**

1000 South Lake Avenue  
Lake Butler, FL 32054  
Mike Ripplinger, Principal  
Bill Cross, Assistant Principal

**UNION JUVENILE RESIDENTIAL FACILITY**

**386-789-1500**

14692 NE County Road 199  
Raiford, FL 32083  
Barry Sams, Director

**UNION COUNTY ADULT SCHOOL**

**386-496-1300**

208 SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lake Butler, FL 32054  
Barry Sams, Director

**THE OUTPOST ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL**

**386-496-1300**

208 SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lake Butler, FL 32054  
Barry Sams, Director

## 2015-16 UNION COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT CALENDAR

July 1	Begin Fiscal Year 2015-2016
July 3-7	Independence Day
July 6-10	FTE Survey 1
August 12-19	Teacher Pre-Planning
August 20	Students Return
September 7	Labor Day Holiday
September 9	Early Release Day*
October 12-16	FTE Survey 2
October 14	Early Release Day*
October 23	46 <sup>th</sup> Day of School (End of 1 <sup>st</sup> 9-Weeks)
October 26	Teacher Workday – Student Holiday
November 11	Early Release Day*
November 23-27	Thanksgiving Holidays
December 9	Early Release Day*
December 21 – January 1	Christmas Holidays
January 4	Staff & Students Return
January 13	Early Release Day*
January 15	90 <sup>th</sup> Day of School (End of 2 <sup>nd</sup> 9-Weeks)
January 18	Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday
January 19	Teacher Workday – Student Holiday
February 8-12	FTE Survey 3
February 10	Early Release Day*
February 15	President’s Day Holiday
March 9	Early Release Day**
March 21-25	Spring Break
March 31	136 <sup>th</sup> Day of School (End of 3 <sup>rd</sup> 9-Weeks)
April 1	Teacher Workday – Student Holiday
April 13	Early Release Day*
May 11	Early Release Day*
May 27	Graduation Day
May 30	Memorial Day Holiday
June 3	180 <sup>th</sup> Day of School (End of 4 <sup>th</sup> 9-Weeks)
June 6	Post Planning
June 13-17	FTE Survey 4
June 30	End Fiscal Year 2015-2016

\*Early Release Days – (LBES – 12:15 PM) (UCHS, LBMS, & UJRF – 12:30 PM)

TEACHERS (not including UJRF teachers)		12-MONTH EMPLOYEES	
Paid Holidays	Workdays	Paid Holidays	Designated Vacation Leave
September 7	August 12-14	July 6	July 7
November 26	August 17-19	September 7	December 21
December 25	October 23	November 23-27	December 28-30
January 1	January 19	December 22-25	March 21-25
January 18	April 1	December 31	
February 15	June 6	January 1	
		January 18	<b>Calendar Adjustment Day</b>
		February 15	July 3
		May 30	July 10



## **CHAPTER 2 – BEING A SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEE**

### **EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS**

The Union County School District has three employee classifications:

- Administrative – personnel who perform management activities such as developing broad policies for the school district and executing those policies at all levels within the school district. Administrative personnel are generally senior level professionals who have been assigned the responsibilities of system-wide or school-wide management functions. Examples of administrative employees include district directors, principals, and assistant principals.
- Instructional – certified professionals who are involved with the instruction of students, either directly or indirectly. Examples of instructional employees include classroom teachers, guidance counselors, media specialists, reading coaches, math coaches, therapists, and teachers on special assignment.
- Support Services – educational support employees whose job functions are neither administrative nor instructional, yet whose work supports the educational process. Some examples are: specialists, technicians, secretaries, clerks, aides, maintenance workers, bus drivers, mechanics, custodians, food service workers, and daycare workers.

### **EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES**

The Union County School District has four employment categories:

- Temporary – employees who are hired as interim replacements, to temporarily supplement the work force, or to assist in the completion of a specific project. Employment assignments in this category are of a limited duration. Employment beyond any initially stated period does not in any way imply a change in employment status. Temporary employees retain that status unless and until notified of a change. While temporary employees receive all legally mandated benefits (such as workers' compensation insurance and social security), they are ineligible for the entire employer's other benefit program. An example of a temporary employee is a substitute employee.
- Probationary – employees whose performance is evaluated to determine whether further employment in a specific position or with the organization is appropriate. Employees who satisfactorily complete the probationary period will be notified of their new employment classification.
- Regular Full-Time – employees not categorized as temporary or probationary who are hired to a position and works the regular full-time schedule for that position as determined by the school district. Generally, they are eligible for the employer's benefit package, subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefit program.
- Regular Part-Time – employees not categorized as temporary or probationary who are hired to a position and works less than the regular full-time schedule for that position as determined by the school district. They are only eligible for a limited amount of benefits in the employer's benefit package, subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefit program.

## **EMPLOYMENT DOCUMENTATION**

All employees must have the following information on file in the Personnel Office:

- Completed application
- 3 reference letters
- Copy of High School Diploma or GED Diploma
- Notarized Loyalty Oath; Personal History Record; FRS Form
- IRS Form, W-4
- Immigration and Naturalization Service Form I-9
- Valid Florida Educators Certificate, a valid Statement of Eligibility, when applicable or Application fees, if applicable
- Official transcripts from each college attended showing degree conferred
- Fingerprints – Personnel Department – Fingerprint fee
- Drug and Alcohol testing when applicable
- Personal Data Sheet
- Drug Free Workplace
- Veterans Preference
- Workers Compensation Employee Information
- Workers Compensation Managed Care Arrangement
- Salary Reduction Form
- Direct Deposit Authorization
- Verification of professional teaching experience
- Statement Related to Code of Ethics
- HIPPA form
- COBRA form
- Health Insurance Information
- Copy of Photograph (DL, ID)
- Copy of Social Security Card
- Verification of Military Experience DD214
- Deferred Comp Vendors
- Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993
- Exemption Status
- Sick Leave Enrollment Request Form
- Notification of Social Security Number Collection and Usage

## **FINGERPRINTING**

Florida law requires that all school board employees and substitutes must be fingerprinted. It is the responsibility of the employee to pay the processing fee that is established by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). Fingerprints are taken in the personnel office and sent to FDLE and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Employees are placed on probationary status pending the processing and determination of compliance with standards for good moral character. When a criminal record is returned, an investigative committee will review the report and complete the investigation to determine if the employee will be retained or dismissed. This information will be maintained with the other confidential records. If the fingerprint report for an instructional/administrative employee filing for initial certification indicates a criminal

history or if the applicant acknowledges a criminal history, the applicant's records shall be referred to the Bureau of Educator Standards for review and determination of eligibility for certification. If the applicant fails to provide the necessary documentation requested by the Bureau of Educator Standards within 90 days after the date of receipt of the certified mail request, the statement of eligibility and pending application shall become invalid. Effective July 1, 2004, school districts are required to conduct national criminal history checks every five years.

### **IMMIGRATION LAW COMPLIANCE**

The Union County School Board complies with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 and is committed to employing only United States Citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in the United States. As a condition of employment, each new employee must properly complete, sign, and date the first section of the Immigration and Naturalization Service Form I-9. Before commencing work, newly rehired employees must also complete the form if they have not previously filed an I-9 with the Personnel Department, if their previous I-9 is more than three (3) years old, or if their previous I-9 is no longer valid.

### **OATH OF LOYALTY**

Florida law requires that all state employees sign an Oath of Loyalty. This form is a part of your employment-processing package and should be completed along with your other personnel papers at the time of employment.

### **PROFESSIONALISM**

Each employee is expected to demonstrate professional and appropriate behavior. Each employee is expected to abide by school and Union County School Board rules, and state and federal laws. Because employees of a school system serve as role models for students, employees are held to the highest standard of conduct (Adams vs. Turlington). In a small rural school district such as ours, the community holds school personnel as examples for children.

### **EXPERIENCE VERIFICATION**

Each year of experience to be counted for salary purposes must meet the criteria prescribed by law. Experience credit may not exceed the limits established by the board or the terms of a negotiated agreement. All experience verification must be:

- Provided on Experience Verification Form or on business stationary by former employers or by a notarized affidavit(s),
- Specify the date(s) of employment, job title, and whether the position was full-time or part-time employment, and the number of days worked in the period of employment (i.e. 130 of 260 days),
- The number of hours worked per week must be included for part-time employment,
- Self-employed experience (i.e. family business) must be verified by an individual knowledgeable of the applicant's service.
- Verification will not be accepted from the applicant or a family member.

Teachers who have worked in a public school system and have applicable experience will receive 100% experience credit for salary purposes. Administrators and non-

certificated personnel with applicable Union County School District experience will receive 100% credit experience for salary purposes. Administrators and non-certificated personnel who do not have applicable Union County School District experience will be given credit for experience as provided in the footnotes of the district salary schedule . No experience credit is approved for substitute or part-time teaching experience unless the service was rendered under contract in excess of one-half the days (99 days) or hours (785 hours) required for a year of service in a full-time position. Florida non-public school teaching experience will be credited provided the school is registered and accredited by SACS or the Florida Association of Nonpublic schools. Military experience shall be credited on a year-for-year basis for up to four years. Service shall be established from the date of full-time active duty to the date of discharge or release from duty and must be verified. The discharge or release from active duty must have been under honorable conditions.

Instructional personnel will be paid according to their highest degree earned, in accordance with the master contract. However, instructional personnel hired on July 1, 2011 or later can only qualify for an advanced degree supplement if the advanced degree is in a subject area currently listed on their teaching certificate. Official transcripts must also be provided before salary is adjusted. When an applicant is employed by the Union County School Board, the personnel office will process the experience verification paperwork and authorize the employee's salary. As experience verifications are received in the Personnel Office, new salary authorizations are made retroactive to the employee's effective date of hire.

### **WORK SCHEDULES**

Employees are hired for various work schedules and times. The work year will vary from 99 days to 261 days. The work day will vary from 3 hours to 8 hours. Check with your supervisor to determine your specific schedule.

### **ATTENDANCE**

- Tardiness – the school district expects all employees to be present and ready to perform their duties at the start of their duty day and to remain present for their entire duty day, unless they have the prior approval of their supervisor. Employees who exhibit chronic tardiness or those who do not notify their supervisor when they are tardy may be subject to disciplinary action.
- Absence – employees who will be away from their normal place of work during normal duty hours are expected to report their absences to their immediate supervisor. Except in cases of emergency or illness, absences should be requested in advance and approved on the appropriate school district form. Forms for leave due to an emergency should be submitted on the day the employee returns to work. In the event an employee takes unapproved leave or is absent without leave, he/she will be subject to disciplinary action.

### **CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

Instructional personnel and administrators must possess a valid certificate issued by the state of Florida or the school district to work in the Union County School District. The

following guidelines indicate the mandatory requirements for obtaining a certificate. Submit all documentation to the Personnel Office.

#### **APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION:**

The personnel office will assist you to apply for certification after your hiring. You must:

- Complete certification application online at [www.fldoe.org/edcert/](http://www.fldoe.org/edcert/). Payment must be made by credit card.
- Submit official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended to the school district and the Department of Education.
- Submit official score report(s) to the school district and the Department of Education.

For additional information concerning specialized areas, contact the personnel office or the Bureau of Educator Certification at (800) 445-6739.

#### **INITIAL CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:**

For a three (3) year non-renewable temporary certificate, you must:

- Hold a Bachelor's degree or higher. The degree must have been awarded by an accredited college or it has been validated.
- Meet specialization requirements for area of certification in full.
- Obtain a 2.5 grade point average on a 4.0 scale in each subject requested on the certificate.
- Have a fingerprint report that has been processed, cleared and submitted by the school district personnel.

#### **PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS:**

For a five year Professional Certificate, you must:

- Meet requirements for a three year non-renewable Temporary Certificate
- Satisfy professional preparation requirements.
- Satisfy the recentness of credit requirement (if necessary)
- Present passing score on:
  - All parts of the general knowledge test if applicable, within one year from date of employment. An individual may not be employed after one year without having passed the general knowledge test. However, an employee may complete the school year for which they received a contract.
  - Professional education subtest, and
  - Subject area examination for each subject or field shown on certificate.

Complete professional education competencies.

#### **PARAPROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

In addition to holding a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent, paraprofessionals with instructional support duties hired after January 8, 2002 must meet one of the following provisions as specified in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001:

- Obtain an associate's or higher degree, or
- Pass the Paraprofessional Exam

### **DRUG TESTING FOR BUS DRIVERS**

Forms for mandatory pre-employment drug screening for full-time bus drivers and substitute bus drivers must be picked up at the District Office. The cost of the drug screening is \$35.00 payable by the employee to the Union County School Board by check or money order. Screening must be completed within one hour of receiving the form from the District Office. The screening is conducted at the Lake Butler Hospital.

### **PERSONAL DATA CHANGE**

All employees are expected to use their legal names in dealing with the Board and other professional agencies. Employees' mailing addresses, telephone numbers, number and names of dependents, name changes due to marriage or divorce, individual to be contacted in the event of an emergency, educational accomplishments, and other such information should be accurate and current at all times. It is the responsibility of each employee to promptly notify the Personnel Department in writing of any changes in status. When changes in personal data occur, new forms (such as W-4 forms, retirement forms, insurance, a copy of the new social security card, and driver license) are required.

### **PROBATIONARY PERIOD**

Instructional personnel hired after July 1, 2011 serve in a probationary status for the first year. The probationary period is intended to give newly hired instructional employees the opportunity to demonstrate his/her ability to achieve a satisfactory level of performance. The employer uses this period to evaluate the instructional employee's capabilities, work habits, and overall performance. During the first year of employment, either the instructional employee and/or the employer may end the employment relationship without a breach of contract and without cause.

During the probationary period, new instructional employees are eligible for those benefits that are required by law, such as workers' compensation insurance and social security. They may also be eligible for other employer-provided benefits, subject to the terms and conditions of each benefit program. Employees should read the information for each specific benefit program for the details on eligibility requirements.

### **USE OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS**

The Union County School Board takes seriously our role in protecting the privacy and confidentiality of our employees and students. We comply with federal and state laws and meet the required standards for securing that information. As provided in Florida Statutes, the Union County School Board hereby makes the following disclosure. Upon employment, each employee must sign a document stating the uses of their social security number along with providing a copy of their social security card. We request employee social security numbers to be used for human resource operations such as payroll or benefits eligibility, background checks, medical claims payment, IRS reporting or other functions where they are needed and legally allowed to be used and requested by the Florida Department of Education and or the Federal government. The school board does not release or disclose social security numbers to other parties except as allowed under state and federal law in performance of official school board business. The collection of employee social security number is mandatory and may only be used as

authorized or prescribed by law. If you have questions regarding this important notice please contact the Director of Finance for the Union County School Board.

### **VACANCIES**

Notice of vacancies within the district shall be posted on the Union County School District web page. When positions become vacant, the vacancies are posted at each school. Notices shall remain posted for a minimum of at least ten (10) days prior to filling the vacancy or until filled. Current employees shall submit their interest for a vacant position by applying for the position on the automated system.

### **UNION MEMBERSHIP**

The Union County Teachers Organization (UCTO) is the labor union that represents instructional employees who elect to join. Employees have the right, without fear of penalty or reprisal, to join or assist the union. While UCTO represents its members, they bargain on behalf of all instructional employees. Those interested in joining the union should contact their local UCTO representative.

### **DUAL AND OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT**

As an employee, you may not perform any duties related to an outside job during regular working hours or during the additional time that is needed to fulfill the responsibilities of the position. Similarly, you may not use the school district's facilities, equipment, or materials in performing outside work.

### **VIOLATIONS OF THE LAW**

As required by the provisions of the State Board of Education and The Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida, a professional employee is required to self-report within 48 hours to the Director of Personnel any arrests or charges involving the abuse of a child or the sale and/or possession of a controlled substance. Such notice shall not be considered an admission of guilt nor shall such notice be admissible for any purpose in any proceeding, civil or criminal, administrative or judicial, investigatory or adjudicatory. In addition, self-reporting shall also be required for any conviction, finding of guilt, withholding of adjudication, commitment to a pretrial diversion program, or entering of a plea of guilty or nolo contendere for any criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation within 48 hours after the final judgment. (A minor traffic violation could be a parking or speeding ticket; however, a DUI is not considered minor.)

### **PERSONAL BUSINESS ON SCHOOL TIME**

No employee of the school district may conduct personal business on school time except for emergencies approved by their supervisor or the Superintendent. School district equipment or supplies shall not be used to conduct personal business or any other activity not connected with the school system. Violation of this rule shall be grounds for disciplinary action.

### **GIFTS AND SOLICITATION**

School district employees, volunteers or agents shall not accept, directly or indirectly, gifts or gratuities from vendors or potential vendors which might influence or appear to influence purchasing decisions.

## **POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

School district employees shall not solicit support of any political candidate, partisan or nonpartisan, during regular work hours. A school district employee who offers him/herself as a candidate for public office shall notify the Superintendent immediately upon qualifying for election. He/she shall conduct his/her campaign so as not to interfere with his/her responsibilities. Some things to remember are:

- Political posters shall not be displayed in schools or on school property
- Political literature shall not be distributed in schools or on school property
- Solicitations for votes or contributions shall not be conducted in schools or on school property
- Students shall not be required to distribute campaign literature
- Employees shall refrain from participation in partisan politics on school property during the hours school is in session

## **ACCESS TO PERSONNEL FILES**

Personnel files are the property of the employer. Access to the information contained in the personnel file of each employee is open to public inspection, with the exception of those restrictions set forth in Florida law. With reasonable advance notice, an employee may review material in a personnel file in the personnel offices and in the presence of the individual appointed by the employer to maintain the file. Information exempt from public inspection consists of the following:

- Complaints or material relating to an on-going investigation.
- Performance evaluations prepared before July 1, 1983.
- Current performance evaluations and the evaluations from the previous year.
- Derogatory material that may be cause for discipline, suspension, or dismissal.
- Payroll deduction records.
- Medical records, including psychiatric, psychological, and/or mental health counseling.
- District employees' name and home address.
- Any information revealing undercover personnel of a criminal justice agency or law enforcement personnel.
- References prior to employment that are marked confidential.

Confidential information can be shared with another person or agency when required by law and when the employee gives written consent for release of information.



## CHAPTER 3 – WORKPLACE STANDARDS AND POLICIES

### **DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

The Union County School District is committed to providing a work environment free of discrimination and harassment. No employee or applicant must tolerate such discrimination or harassment. No person shall, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin, gender identity, marital status, disability if otherwise qualified, or on the basis of the use of a language other than English by Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity, or in any employment conditions or practices conducted by this school district, except as provided by law. Further, school district employees must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). It is unlawful to discriminate against a qualified individual with a disability who can perform the essential functions of his/her job with reasonable accommodations.

If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any way, please contact:  
Barry Sams, Equity Coordinator  
55 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lake Butler, FL 32054  
386-496-1300  
SamsB@union.k12.fl.us

### **NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

The Florida Educational Equity Act requires that public education agencies regularly notify staff, students, applicants for employment, parents, and the general public of its policies of non-discrimination. Discrimination is prohibited by Union County School Board Policy 2.16 as described above. The information below is listed to comply with the notification requirements of the educational equity act.

**Non-Discrimination in Employment** – All employees and applicants for employment with the Union County School Board shall be recruited, selected, and assigned solely on the basis of experience, qualifications and the necessary requirements for the vacant position. Race, religion, age, national origin, marital status, gender, and genetic information will not be considered factors in the recruitment, selection, and assignment of such personnel, nor shall any qualified disabled person be excluded from consideration for employment solely on the basis of his/her disability.

**Non-Discrimination in Student Activities** – No student enrolled in the Union County Schools shall, on the basis of race, religion, age, national origin, gender, marital status, disability, or genetic information, be excluded from participation in or be subjected to discrimination under any curricular or any other school sponsored activity. Career and technical education programs are included in the curricular programs offered without discrimination. Opportunities for using school facilities will be afforded to all youth groups without discrimination. This includes the Boy Scouts of America or any other youth group as provided in the Boy Scouts Act. This rule shall apply to all present and

future course offerings and to all other school sponsored activities in which students are eligible to participate.

**Grievance Procedures** – Grievances should be filed with the following personnel:

Employee Grievance

Barry Sams  
Director of Personnel and Secondary Education  
55 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lake Butler, FL 32054  
386-496-1300

Student Grievance – Educational Equity Act

Barry Sams  
Director of Personnel and Secondary Education  
55 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lake Butler, FL 32054  
386-496-1300

Student Grievance – Americans with Disabilities Act or Section 504 Rehabilitation Act

Christie Whitehead  
Director of ESE and Student Services  
55 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lake Butler, FL 32054  
386-496-2045 ext. 231

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT POLICY**

The policies and administrative regulations of the Union County School District have traditionally sought to attain ideal conditions of Equal Employment Opportunity. These policies and regulations shall be amended where necessary to ensure full compliance with the letter and the spirit of the law, and apply to all employment positions. The policy is to select employees as needed on the basis of merit, training, and experience. There shall be no discrimination against any applicant or employee on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation except when it is necessary to meet a bona fide occupational requirement. The school district shall take all necessary action to comply with the federal, state, and local laws prohibiting discrimination in employment. We do this to reaffirm our commitment to Equal Employment Opportunity and to refine our implementation of existing policies as they apply to recruitment, hiring, training, promotion, personnel management practices, and collective bargaining agreements.

**REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS IN EMPLOYMENT**

In accordance with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) of 1990, an employee may request reasonable accommodations when he/she meets the criteria of a disability as defined by ADA. ADA has a three-part definition of disability. Under ADA, an individual with a disability has:

- A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity;
- A record of such an impairment; or
- Is regarded as having such impairment.

Reasonable accommodations shall be provided that will not impose undue hardship to the school or district. Reasonable accommodations can involve the following:

- Modifications or adjustments to a job application process that enable or qualify an applicant with a disability to be considered for the position such qualified applicant desires; or
- Modifications or adjustments to the work environment or to the manner or circumstances under which the position held or desired is customarily performed, that enable a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of that position; or
- Modifications/adjustments enabling employees with disabilities to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment as are enjoyed by other similarly situated employees without disabilities (i.e. making existing facilities readily accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities, job restructuring, etc.).

Employees desiring reasonable accommodations in employment may contact the Personnel Office.

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

The Union County School Board forbids sexual harassment in any form, whether by an administrator, teacher, any other adult, or any student on school property or at any school related activity. Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other inappropriate oral, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Such conduct is made either explicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individuals; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonable interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating hostile or offensive working environment.

The Director of Personnel shall be the district's contact person for all matters dealing with sexual harassment. Persons who allege sexual harassment may also report such actions to any teacher, principal, administrator or other responsible person within the school/work site where the action occurred. All complaints shall be reported to the Director of Personnel and investigated as promptly as practicable. Filing a complaint of sexual harassment will not reflect upon the individual's status, future employment, work assignments, future grades or extracurricular activities. A substantiated charge of sexual harassment shall subject the individual to disciplinary actions.

## **GRIEVANCE**

If an employee has a complaint, which he/she believes may become the basis for a grievance, the employee shall discuss the complaint, in an informal manner with his/her immediate supervisor. If the problem is not resolved, the employee may file a formal grievance with the Director of Personnel.

The purpose of the grievance procedure is to resolve at the lowest possible level and in the most expedient and impartial manner, any dispute between members of the bargaining unit and management, concerning the terms of the contract. Employees are encouraged to read the collective bargaining agreement and may refer to the grievance procedure/form in the contract should it become necessary.

## **ALCOHOL AND DRUG FREE WORKPLACE**

The Union County School District is an alcohol and drug free workplace. As such, no employee shall possess, consume, sell, distribute, dispense, use or be under the influence of any alcoholic beverages in the workplace. Nor shall any employee possess, consume, sell, manufacture, distribute, dispense, use or be under the influence of, on or off the job or in the workplace, any narcotic, drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana or any other controlled substance, as defined by federal and state law. As a condition of employment, each employee will: (a) abide by the terms of this policy, and (b) notify the Superintendent of any criminal drug statute arrest or conviction within 48 hours.

## **WEAPONS PROHIBITED**

No employee of the school district shall have a weapon in his/her possession while on school property or at a school activity. Guns, whether operable or inoperable, loaded or unloaded, facsimile weapons or antique weapons may not be brought on to school property including the parking lot or to a school activity. Authorized law enforcement officers, including the School Resource Officer, may have weapons in their possession while on school campuses while on duty.

## **BLOOD BORNE PATHOGENS**

Universal precautions will be observed by all employees to prevent contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials. Annual training will be provided to employees who are employed in an identified occupational exposure position. The principal or supervisor is responsible for monitoring this process and ensuring that universal precautions are observed.

## **CHILD ABUSE REPORTING**

Each school district employee is considered a "mandated reporter." All employees have an affirmative duty to report all cases of actual or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect, and shall have immunity from liability if such cases are reported in good faith. The failure of an employee to report suspected cases of child abuse shall subject the employee to disciplinary measures. The telephone number for the Child Abuse Hotline is 1-800-96ABUSE (1-800-962-2873).

## **TOBACCO USE IN DISTRICT FACILITIES**

The Union County School District prohibits the use of any form of tobacco products in school district facilities, vehicles, and areas designated for various student programs and activities. Employee violations of this section will lead to disciplinary action in accordance with personnel policies and may include a verbal warning, written reprimand, or referral to an outside agency for participation in a tobacco cessation program. The Union County Adult School may allow smoking by adults outside the regular school day in spaces designated as smoking areas.

## **STUDENT SUPERVISION**

Proper supervision of students shall be provided while the students are under the immediate control of the school. Supervision shall be maintained on the school grounds, in classrooms, on the bus, in student occupied areas of buildings, on field trips, during any extracurricular activity, at school-sponsored functions, and at any other school related sponsored activity.

Any employee who has responsibility for the supervision of students in the performance of their normal duties, or who is assigned duty requiring the supervision of students needs to be diligent in supervising each child. Obviously we want each child to be safe. An employee who fails to provide such student supervision by failing to report for duty or by leaving his/her post of duty without being properly relieved of such duty shall be deemed guilty of neglect of duty. Any person charged with such neglect of duty shall be subject to disciplinary action.

## **BULLYING POLICY**

School Board Policy 5.101 prohibits bullying and harassment. The policy states:

- I. Statement Prohibiting Bullying and Harassment
  - A. It is the policy of the Union County School District that all of its students and school employees have an educational setting that is safe, secure and free from harassment and bullying of any kind. The District will not tolerate bullying and harassment of any type. Conduct that constitutes bullying and harassment, as defined herein, is prohibited.
  - B. The District upholds that bullying or harassment of any student or school employee is prohibited
    1. During any education program or activity conducted by a public K-12 educational institution;
    2. During any school-related or school-sponsored program or activity;
    3. On a school bus of a public K-12 educational institution; or
    4. Through the use of data or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network of a public K- 12 education institution.
- II. Definitions
  - A. **Bullying** means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees. It is further defined as unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by a student or adult, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile,

or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual's school performance or participation; and may involve but is not limited to

1. Teasing;
2. Social Exclusion;
3. Threat;
4. Intimidation;
5. Stalking;
6. Physical violence;
7. Theft;
8. Sexual, religious, or racial harassment;
9. Public humiliation; or
10. Destruction of property.

B. **Harassment** means any threatening, insulting or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee that

1. Places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property;
2. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits; or
3. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school.

C. **Bullying, harassment and cyberbullying** also encompass

1. Retaliation against a student or school employee by another student or school employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying or harassment. Reporting an act of bullying or harassment that is not made in good faith is considered retaliation.
2. Perpetuation of conduct listed in the definition of bullying, harassment or cyberbullying by an individual or group with intent to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause emotional or physical harm to a student or school employee by
  - a. Incitement or coercion;
  - b. Accessing or knowingly and willingly causing psychological distress through electronic means;
  - c. Acting in a manner that has an effect substantially similar to the effect of bullying, harassment or cyberbullying.

D. **Cyberstalking** as defined in s. 784.048(1)(d), F.S., means to engage in a course of conduct to communicate, or to cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person and serving no legitimate purpose.

E. **Cyberbullying** means systematically and chronically inflicting psychological distress on one or more students or employees through the use of electronic means.

### III. Behavior Standards

- A. The Union County School District expects students to conduct themselves as appropriate for their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of school facilities and equipment.
  - B. The District believes that standards for student behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the students, parents/legal guardians, staff, and community members producing an atmosphere that encourages students to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for District and community property on the part of students, staff, and community members. Students shall obey constituted authority and respond to those who hold that authority. Because students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers will demonstrate appropriate behavior, treat others with civility and respect, The District is committed to recognition for positive reinforcement for good conduct, self-discipline, good citizenship, and academic success.
  - C. Student rights shall be explained as outlined in this policy and in the Student Code of Conduct.
- IV. Training for students, parents, teachers, district staff, school administrators, student support staff, counseling staff, bus drivers, School Resource Officer/Deputies, contractors and school volunteers on identifying, preventing, and responding to bullying will be conducted.
- At the beginning of each school year, the school principal/designee and/or district administrator shall provide awareness of this policy, as well as the process for reporting incidents and investigations to students, school staff, parents, or other persons responsible for the welfare of a student through appropriate references in the Student Code of Conduct, Employee Handbooks, the school website, and/or through other reasonable means.
- V. Disciplinary sanctions (Consequences) and due process for a person who commits an act of bullying or harassment under this policy.
- A. Committing an act of bullying or harassment
    1. Concluding whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all of the facts and surrounding circumstances. The physical location or time of access of a computer-related incident cannot be raised as a defense in any disciplinary action.
    2. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for students who commit acts of bullying or harassment may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, as outlined in the *Code of Student Conduct*.
    3. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee, found to have committed an act of bullying or harassment, shall be determined in accordance with District policies, procedures, and agreements. Additionally, egregious acts of harassment by certified educators may result in a sanction against an educator's state issued certificate.

4. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer, found to have committed an act of bullying or harassment, shall be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.
- B. Wrongful and intentional accusation of an act of bullying or harassment
1. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student, found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as a means of bullying or harassment, range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion, as outlined in the *Code of Student Conduct*.
  2. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee, found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as a means of bullying or harassment, shall be determined in accordance with District policies, procedures, and agreements.
  - 3) Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer, found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another as a means of bullying or harassment shall be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials.
- VI. Reporting an Act of Bullying or Harassment
- A. At each school, the principal or the principal's designee shall be responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy, as with all infractions from the Student Code of Conduct.
  - B. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the principal or the principal's designee.
  - C. All other members of the school community, including students, parents/legal guardians, bus drivers, volunteers, and visitors are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy anonymously or in person to the principal or principal's designee.
  - D. The principal of each school in the District shall establish and prominently publicize to students, staff, volunteers, and parents/legal guardians, how a report of bullying or harassment may be filed either in person or anonymously and how this report will be acted upon.
  - E. The victim of bullying or harassment, anyone who witnessed the bullying or harassment, and anyone who has credible information that an act of bullying or harassment has taken place may file a report of bullying or harassment.
  - F. A school employee, school volunteer, student, parent/legal guardian or other persons who promptly reports in good faith an act of bullying or harassment to the appropriate school official and who makes this report in compliance with the procedures set forth in the District policy is immune from a cause of action for damages arising out of the reporting itself or any failure to remedy the reported incident.



- G. Submission of a good faith complaint or report of bullying or harassment will not affect the complainant or reporter's future employment, grades, learning or working environment, or work assignments.
  - H. Any written or oral reporting of an act of bullying or harassment shall be considered an official means of reporting such act(s).
  - I. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report.
- VII. Investigation of a Report of Bullying or Harassment
- A. The investigation of a reported act of bullying or harassment is deemed to be a school-related activity and shall begin with a report of such an act.
  - B. The principal or designee may select the School Resource Officer, if one is employed by the district, or such other individual(s), employed by the school and trained in investigative procedures, to initiate the investigation. The person may not be the accused perpetrator (harasser or bully), victim or family relative.
  - C. Documented interviews of the victim, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses shall be conducted privately, separately, and shall be confidential. Each individual (victim, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses) will be interviewed separately and at no time will the alleged perpetrator and victim be interviewed together.
  - D. The investigator shall collect and evaluate the facts including but not limited to
    - 1. Description of incident(s) including nature of the behavior;
    - 2. Context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred;
    - 3. How often the conduct occurred;
    - 4. Whether there were past incidents or past continuing patterns of behavior;
    - 5. The relationship between the parties involved;
    - 6. The characteristics of parties involved, *i.e.*, grade, age;
    - 7. The identity and number of individuals who participated in bullying or harassing behavior;
    - 8. Where the alleged incident(s) occurred;
    - 9. Whether the conduct adversely affected the student's education or educational environment;
    - 10. Whether the alleged victim felt or perceived an imbalance of power as a result of the reported incident; and
    - 11. The date, time, and method in which the parents/legal guardians of all parties involved were contacted.
  - E. Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy shall require a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances and shall include
    - 1. Recommended remedial steps necessary to stop the bullying and/or harassing behavior; and
    - 2. A written final report to the principal.
  - F. The maximum of ten (10) school days shall be the limit for the initial filing of incidents and completion of the investigative procedural steps.

- G. The highest level of confidentiality possible will be upheld regarding the submission of a complaint or a report of bullying and/or harassment and the investigative procedures that follow.
- VIII. Investigation to Determine Whether a Reported Act of Bullying or Harassment is Within the Scope of the District
- A. The principal or designee will assign an individual(s) who is trained in investigative procedures to initiate an investigation of whether an act of bullying or harassment is within the scope of the School District.
  - B. The trained investigator(s) will provide a report on results of investigation with recommendations for the principal to make a determination if an act of bullying or harassment falls within the scope of the District.
    - 1. If it is within the scope of the District, a thorough investigation shall be conducted.
    - 2. If it is outside the scope of the District and determined a criminal act, the principal shall refer the incident(s) to appropriate law enforcement.
    - 3. If it is outside the scope of the District and determined not a criminal act, the principal or designee shall inform the parents/legal guardians of all students involved.
- IX. Notification to Parents/Guardians of Incidents of Bullying or Harassment
- A. Immediate notification to the parents/legal guardians of a victim of bullying or harassment.
    - 1. The principal, or designee, shall promptly report via telephone, personal conference, and/or in writing, the occurrence of any incident of bullying or harassment as defined by this policy to the parent or legal guardian of all students involved on the same day an investigation of the incident(s) has been initiated. Notification must be consistent with the student privacy rights under the applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).
    - 2. If the bullying incident results in the perpetrator being charged with a crime, the principal, or designee, shall by telephone or in writing by first class mail, inform the parents/legal guardian of the victim(s) involved in the bullying incident about the Unsafe School Choice Option (No Child Left Behind, Title IX, Part E, Subpart 2, Section 9532) that states “. . . a student who becomes a victim of a violent criminal offense, as determined by State law, while in or on the grounds of a public elementary school or secondary school that the student attends, be allowed to attend a safe public elementary school or secondary school within the local educational agency, including a public charter school.”
  - B. Immediate notification to the parents/legal guardians of the perpetrator of an act bullying or harassment.

The principal, or designee, shall promptly report via telephone, personal conference, and/or in writing, the occurrence of any incident of bullying or harassment as defined by this policy to the parent or legal guardian of all students involved on the same day an investigation of the incident(s) has

been initiated. Notification must be consistent with the student privacy rights under the applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

- C. Notification to local agencies where criminal charges may be pursued. Once the investigation has been completed and it has been determined that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, all appropriate local law enforcement agencies will be notified by telephone and/or in writing.
- X. Referral of Victims and Perpetrators of Bullying or Harassment for Counseling  
When bullying or harassment is suspected or when a bullying incident is reported, counseling services shall be made available to the victim(s), perpetrator(s), and parents/guardians.
  - A. The teacher or parent/legal guardian may request informal consultation with school staff, e.g., school counselor, school psychologist, to determine the severity of concern and appropriate steps to address the concern. The teacher may request that the involved student's parents or legal guardian are included.
  - B. School personnel or the parent/legal guardian may refer a student to the school intervention team for consideration of appropriate services. Parent or legal guardian involvement shall be required when the student is referred to the intervention team.
  - C. If a formal discipline report or formal complaint is made, the principal or designee must refer the student(s) to the school intervention team for determination of counseling support and interventions. Parent or legal guardian involvement shall be required.
  - D. The intervention team may recommend
    - 1. Counseling and support to address the needs of the victims of bullying or harassment;
    - 2. Research-based counseling or interventions to address the behavior of the students who bully and harass others, e.g., empathy training, anger management; and/or
    - 3. Research-based counseling or interventions which include assistance and support provided to parents/legal guardians, if deemed necessary or appropriate.
- XI. Reporting Incidents of Bullying and Harassment
  - A. Incidents of bullying or harassment shall be reported in the school's report of data concerning school safety and discipline data required under s. 1006.09(6), F.S. The report shall include each incident of bullying or harassment and the resulting consequences, including discipline and referrals. The report shall also include each reported incident of bullying or harassment that did not meet the criteria of a prohibited act under this section with recommendations regarding such incidents.
  - B. The District will utilize Florida's School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting (SESIR) Statewide Report on School Safety and Discipline Data, which includes bullying/harassment as an incident code as well as bullying-related as a related element code.

1. Bullying and/or harassment incidents shall be reported in SESIR with the bullying/harassment code.
  2. If the bullying/harassment results in any of the following SESIR incidents, the incident will be coded appropriately using the relevant incident code and the bullying-related code. Such incidents are
    - a. Arson
    - b. Battery
    - c. Breaking and Entering
    - d. Disruption on Campus
    - e. Major Fighting
    - f. Homicide
    - g. Kidnapping
    - h. Larceny/Theft
    - i. Robbery
    - j. Sexual Battery
    - k. Sexual Harassment
    - l. Sexual Offenses
    - m. Threat/Intimidation
    - n. Vandalism
    - o. Weapons Possession
    - p. Other Major (Major incidents not fitting within other definitions)
- C. Discipline and referral data shall be recorded in Student Discipline/Referral Action Report and Automated Student Information System.
- D. The District shall provide bullying incident, discipline, and referral data to the Florida Department of Education in the format requested, through Survey 5 from Education Information and Accountability Services, and at designated dates provided by the Department.
- XII. Instruction on Identifying, Preventing, and Responding to Bullying or Harassment
- A. The District shall ensure that schools sustain healthy, positive, and safe learning environments for all students. It is committed to maintain a social climate and social norms in all schools that prohibit bullying and harassment. This requires the efforts of everyone in the school environment – teachers; administrators; counselors; school nurses; other nonteaching staff such as bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers; school librarians; parents/legal guardians; and students.
  - B. Students, parents/legal guardians, teachers, school administrators, counseling staff, and school volunteers shall be given instruction at a minimum on an annual basis on the District's policy and regulations against bullying and harassment. The instruction shall include evidence-based methods of preventing bullying and harassment as well as how to effectively identify and respond to bullying in schools.
- XIII. Reporting the Actions Taken to Protect the Victim
- The principal or designee shall by telephone and/or in writing report the occurrence of any incident of bullying as defined by this policy to the parent or legal guardian of all students involved on the same day an investigation of the incident has been initiated. According to the level of infraction, parents/legal guardians will be notified by telephone and/or writing of actions being taken to protect the child; the frequency

of notification will depend on the seriousness of the bullying or harassment incident. Notification must be consistent with the student privacy rights under the applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

XIV. Publicizing the Policy

- A. At the beginning of each school year, the Superintendent or designee shall, in writing, inform school staff, parents/legal guardians, or other persons responsible for the welfare of a student of the District's student safety and violence prevention policy.
- B. Each District school shall provide notice to students and staff of this policy through appropriate references in the *Code of Student Conduct* and employee handbooks and through other reasonable means.
- C. The Superintendent shall also make all contractors contracting with the District aware of this policy.
- D. Each school principal shall develop an annual process for discussing the school district policy on bullying and harassment with students and staff.

Reminders of the policy and bullying prevention messages such as posters and signs will be displayed around each school and on the District school buses.

**EMERGENCY CLOSING OF SCHOOLS**

There may be circumstances where the Superintendent may close schools or dismiss schools early due to emergency situations. Usually these circumstances are related to severe weather or natural disasters. The school district will provide notification to all affected personnel and students when schools must be closed. Updates will be provided throughout the emergency period.

**VISITORS IN THE WORKPLACE**

All visitors are required to enter any school district facility through the main entrance and to sign in or report to the building's main office. Authorized visitors will receive directions or be escorted to their destination. Employees who observe an unauthorized individual on the district premises should immediately direct him or her to the building office and contact the administrator in charge.

**COPYRIGHT LAW**

Copyright is the intangible intellectual property right which a person owns in works of their own creation. The copyright statute gives the person who originates a creative work the sole right to publish, distribute, copy, perform, and display the work, and to make derivative works or sequels to it. Use of copyrighted materials in the classroom does not automatically exclude that use from copyright laws. Educational materials presented by teachers or incorporated into students' work must respect copyright laws unless the work is in the public domain or the use meets the limited definition of the copyright statute's fair use exemption. Attribution and citation does not make a copyright infringement lawful. The copyright statute states that fair uses of copyrighted material will not comprise a copyright infringement. These uses may include teaching, scholarship, and research, but only upon weighing four factors: the purpose and character of the use; the nature of the work; the portion of the work used relative to the size of the entire work; and the effect of the use on the work's commercial value.

## **CHAPTER 4 – EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

Eligible employees of the Union County School District are provided a wide range of benefits. A number of the programs, such as social security, workers' compensation, state retirement, short-term and long-term disability, and unemployment compensation cover all employees in the manner prescribed by law. Benefit eligibility is dependent upon a variety of factors, including employee classification. Some benefit programs require contributions from the employee. Your supervisor can identify the programs for which you are eligible. Details of many of these programs can be found elsewhere in the employee handbook.

The following benefits are available to eligible employees:

Insurance (Health, Life, Dental, Disability, and Accident)

Paid Holidays

Sick Leave Bank

Sick Leave Benefit Pay

State of Florida Retirement System

Terminal Leave Pay

Travel Reimbursement

Unemployment Compensation

Uniforms

Vacation Leave

Workers' Compensation

### **INSURANCE**

Full-time (working a minimum of 22.5 hours per week) employees are provided an opportunity to participate in Board approved insurance plans that offer a variety of covered services. Employees are encouraged to select the benefit package that best meet their family's needs. The board authorizes pre-tax payroll deductions as well as makes a contribution to each full time employee who selects health insurance coverage. A package describing available insurance plan coverage will be provided to you after the Board has approved your employment. Coverage is available the first of the month, 30 days after your hire date.

Employees may also participate in the Board approved tax shelter annuity programs [403(b), 457 and 401(k)]. The employee may select from several companies approved by the Board. The contributions to an annuity must be payroll deducted.

### **PAID HOLIDAYS**

All school holidays shall be established by the action of the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent. Some of these holidays are established as paid holidays. All cost centers will observe the holidays as provided on the approved school calendar.

### **SICK LEAVE BANK**

The Sick Leave Bank was established to provide employees emergency sick leave for illness or injury beyond that available under provisions governing sick leave. Participation is voluntary and open to any full-time employee who has worked a full year with the school system and has accrued a minimum of six (6) sick days. Enrollment in the sick leave bank will be accepted during July 1 through February 1 of each school year. Employees must wait thirty (30) days after initial enrollment before being eligible to withdraw days from the sick leave bank. Participating employees are required to contribute one (1) sick leave day during the enrollment period, and one (1) sick leave day each time the bank reaches 400 hours.

The employee must make application to the Sick Leave Bank in order to receive benefits. All requests for withdrawal of days from the Sick Leave Bank shall be addressed to the Sick Leave Bank Committee.

Any leave withdrawn must be used for the employee's catastrophic personal illness, accident, or injury. Approval for sick leave from the bank will not be granted unless the employee's accumulated sick leave and other leave has been exhausted. A participating employee is not required to replace the days he/she uses, except as a regular contributing member. Any leave donated by a participating employee will not be returned when the employee chooses to no longer participate in the Sick Leave Bank.

### **SICK LEAVE BENEFIT PAY**

At the end of each year, employees may request payment for accumulated sick leave for up to ten (10) days. The employee is paid in accordance with his/her daily rate of pay multiplied by 80%. Days for such payment are deducted from the accumulated sick leave balance. Employees requesting this benefit must make application to the Finance Department by June 30.

### **STATE OF FLORIDA RETIREMENT SYSTEM**

All new employees automatically become members of the Florida Retirement System (FRS) and are covered by Federal Social Security. Employees contribute 3% of their salary into the Florida Retirement System fund, the district contributes a percentage designated by the state. The district matches your social security contributions. The State offers a choice of two retirement options; the pension plan requiring six year vesting or the investment plan requiring one year vesting. You will have five months from the date you are first employed by an FRS employer to make your selection. When an employee is ready to retire, he/she should contact the benefits office. Employees may receive federal social security benefits in addition to state retirement, when eligible.

Effective 7/1/10 the re-employment rules for FRS retirees changed:

- FRS members who retire from the Pension Plan after 7/1/10 cannot return to employment in any FRS position for six months following retirement; there are no exceptions to this rule.
- A Pension Plan retiree may return to an FRS position in the seventh through 12<sup>th</sup> months but must give up their retirement benefit during that period.

- After the 12<sup>th</sup> month a Pension Plan retiree may begin drawing their retirement benefit in addition to their salary.
- For re-hire rules for the Investment Plan retirees please contact the Investment Plan Financial Guidance line at 1-866-446-9377.
- A retiree from the Pension Plan or Investment Plan who is re-hired after 7/1/10 will not be eligible to earn a second retirement benefit.
- Any withdrawal or rollover in the Investment Plan is considered retirement.

Always check with the Personnel Department and the Florida Retirement System office in Tallahassee if you have questions.

### **TERMINAL LEAVE PAY**

Upon retirement from the district, any employee or his/her beneficiary, if service is terminated by death, shall receive terminal leave pay for accumulated sick leave up to the maximum allowed by law. Employees transferring to other districts or terminating for reasons other than retirement have the option of receiving terminal leave pay for accumulated sick leave earned in Union County or transferring their sick leave balance to another district. The employee shall indicate his/her preference by submitting a request to the Board in writing during his/her last month of employment.

### **TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT**

Reimbursement is provided to employees for authorized travel when approved by the employee's supervisor, superintendent and/or the School Board. Florida law establishes rates for travel. No reimbursement is given for travel between the employee's home and workstation.

In-district travel is computed in accordance with the district mileage schedule, or the odometer reading from the point of departure to point of destination plus vicinity mileage. Out-of-district travel is established by official state road maps plus vicinity mileage. When employees are traveling extended distances in a county car, a fuel or credit card from the district office should be checked-out for use. Persons traveling to the same meeting are encouraged to travel together.

Reimbursement may be requested for taxi, and ferry fares; bridge, road, and tunnel tolls; storage and parking fees; communication expense and convention registration fees when properly supported by receipts. No reimbursement may be authorized for gratuities or unauthorized travel.

### **UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION**

Unemployment compensation provides temporary income payments to make up a part of the wages lost to workers who lose their jobs through no fault of their own, and who are able and available for work. It is a temporary income to help individuals absorb some of the shock of unemployment. Employees may be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits if they:

- Are terminated or partially unemployed through no fault of their own; and
- Are able to work and available for work; and are registered for and seeking employment.



To qualify for benefits the employee must file a claim, have the necessary wage credits, and not be subject to any of the disqualification's provided for in the law. Ten-month employees are not eligible for unemployment compensation during the summer if they have been reappointed by July 1. Employees interested in requesting unemployment compensations should contact the Personnel Department at (386) 496-2045 ext. 228 or the Florida Department of Labor and Employment Security, Division of Unemployment, at (800) 204-2418 or online at [www.fluidnow.com](http://www.fluidnow.com).

### **UNIFORMS**

The School Board appropriates funds for the purchase and maintenance of specialized clothing, footwear, uniforms and protective paraphernalia for certain categories of employees (i.e. food service workers, mechanics, maintenance workers) because of required regulations and daily exposure to hazardous working conditions.

### **VACATION LEAVE**

Vacation time off with pay is available to eligible employees to provide opportunities for rest, relaxation, and personal pursuits. An employee on less than a 12-month contract may earn no vacation leave. See page 28 for more information.

### **WORKERS' COMPENSATION**

The Union County School Board provides comprehensive workers' compensation insurance program at no cost to employees. This program covers any injury or illness sustained in the course of employment that requires medical treatment. Any employee who sustains a work-related injury or illness should inform his or her supervisor immediately. No matter how minor an on-the-job injury may appear, it is important that it be reported immediately. This will enable an eligible employee to qualify for coverage as quickly as possible. When a case is turned over to workers' compensation, the insurance carrier, in accordance with Florida law, will determine eligibility and benefits available. Medical expenses and travel for doctor appointments are assumed by workers' compensation.

## **CHAPTER 5 – EMPLOYEE LEAVE**

### **ABSENCE WITHOUT LEAVE**

Any employee who is willfully absent from duty without leave will interrupt continuity of service, and shall forfeit compensation for the time of the absence and his/her employment shall be subject to termination by the Board.

### **FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE**

The Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 entitles eligible/qualified employees up to 12 weeks of paid or unpaid leave per year for one (1) of the following reasons:

- Birth of a child, and to care for the newborn child;
- Placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care;
- To care for the employee's child, spouse or parent with a serious health condition; or
- Because of a serious health condition that makes an employee unable to perform the functions of the employee's job.

To be eligible, an employee must have worked a full contract year (July through June) or must have worked for at least 1,250 hours during a 12-month period (July through June). An employee who wishes to take Family Medical Leave must provide the supervisor with at least thirty (30) calendar days advance notice before the leave begins; or due to an emergency, a change in circumstances, or lack of knowledge, the notice of intent to take Family Medical Leave must be given as soon as possible and practical.

Under Family Medical Leave, the Board's contribution for health insurance will continue to be paid for three (3) months only; however, an employee on such leave will not earn retirement credit for any month(s) during which no salary is paid. If an employee desires, he/she may purchase retirement credit for the Family Medical Leave taken, provided the individual is in compliance with FRS laws. Eligible employees desiring such leave must complete the Family Medical Leave form and submit it for Board approval.

At the discretion of the Board, and in accordance with Board policy, employees are allowed to use their accumulated sick leave, and/or Family Medical Leave for the purpose of parenting. The request for parenting leave should be made in advance and shall not exceed one (1) year. A physician's statement is required with the application for leave.

### **HOLIDAYS**

All school holidays shall be established by the action of the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent. All schools will observe the holidays as provided on the approved school calendar.

### **ILLNESS-IN-LINE-OF-DUTY LEAVE**

The School Board grants illness-in-line-of-duty leave to eligible employees who are unable to perform their duties as determined by the Board approved physicians, because

of a personal injury/illness received in the discharge of their duties as described in School Board Policy 6.241. The Board allows up-to a maximum of 10 days each school fiscal year. Such leave is non-cumulative from year to year.

When an employee sustains such an illness or injury, he/she must notify the site administrator as soon as possible. The site administrator completes the appropriate leave and notice of injury forms in accordance with School Board's rules and regulations.

### **JURY DUTY AND WITNESS LEAVE**

Employees are encouraged to fulfill their civic responsibilities by serving jury and witness duty when required. The employees shall make application for temporary duty. When the litigation or court action is of a personal nature, a request for personal leave shall be made. The original or a copy of the subpoena/summons must be attached to the application for leave. The employee shall receive his/her regular salary and may retain any remuneration received from the court for such service. All applications for jury duty and witness leave must be approved by the principal or supervisor and submitted to the Superintendent.

### **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

A leave of absence is permission granted by the Board, or allowed under its adopted policies for an employee to be absent from duty for a specified period of time, with the right to return to employment upon the expiration of the leave. Employees returning from leave will retain full credit for years of service credited to them prior to the leave.

If the employee is on an approved leave of absence for a full contracted year and the employee wishes to return to work the following year, the employee must notify their principal / supervisor and the Superintendent in writing of their intent by the time frame specified. Failure of the employee to notify the principal/supervisor and Superintendent of his / her intent to return to employment may result in termination of employment.

### **LEAVE REQUESTS**

Any absence shall be covered by leave duty authorized and granted. Leave may be with or without pay as provided by law and regulations of School Board Policy. Leave requests shall be in writing on the forms prescribed by the Board. The employee is responsible for completing the appropriate paperwork requesting leave. All requests for leave, except for sickness and emergencies, must be requested and approved by the Board or Superintendent in advance.

### **MILITARY LEAVE**

Employees are allowed to use military leave when they are required to serve in the armed forces, or because of membership in the reserves. Compensation allowed for military leave during peacetime shall not exceed seventeen (17) days. When an employee enters voluntarily into any branch of the armed services for temporary or an extended service, military leave may be granted at the discretion of the Board.

An employee granted military leave for extended duty shall, upon completion of the military duty, file an application for re-employment within six (6) months following the date of the release or discharge from active military duty. The Board shall, within six (6)

months following receipt of the application, reassign the employee to duty in the school system.

### **PERSONAL LEAVE**

The School Board allows six (6) days of personal leave with pay for all employees for each fiscal year for personal reasons, including emergencies. These days are non-cumulative and are charged to sick leave. All personal leave, except emergencies, must be requested and approved in advance.

### **PROFESSIONAL LEAVE**

Professional leave may be granted to an administrative or instructional staff member with or without pay in accordance with the following provisions:

- Summer School Attendance – Any regular member of the instructional staff may be granted professional leave for summer school during the time pupils are not in attendance. Personnel shall be required to submit an official transcript as evidence of summer school attendance. The following requirements shall govern such leave:
  - To receive professional leave with pay during post-school planning, a teacher must be returning to the county to teach the following year.
  - To receive professional leave with pay during pre-school planning, a teacher must be enrolled in school and under contract to teach in the county during the coming school term.
- Extended Professional Leave – Extended professional leave may be granted for a period of time not to exceed one (1) year to any member of the instructional or administrative staff who has served satisfactorily in the school district. No one may be granted more than two (2) consecutive years of extended professional leave. An employee granted extended professional leave for study shall carry not less than the number of semester hours required of a full-time student enrolled at that institution taking graduate work for an advanced degree. Personnel granted leave for this purpose shall be required to submit an official transcript as evidence of attendance.

### **SICK LEAVE**

The School Board grants sick leave to eligible employees for periods of temporary absence due to illness or injury. Instructional employees, hired on a full-time basis, are entitled to four (4) days of sick leave as of the first working day and will then earn one (1) day per month credited at the end of the month for a total of 10 sick leave days.

School related and administrative employees, employed on a full-time basis, will earn four (4) days of sick leave at the end of the first month of employment, and shall earn one (1) day per month credited at the end of the month for a total of 9 days for 9 month employees, 10 days for 10 month employees, 11 days for 11 month employees, and 12 days for 12 month employees.

Employees who expect to be absent from duty shall notify their direct supervisor / principal the evening immediately preceding the day of absence, if possible. Where an absence is due to an emergency, the employee shall notify their supervisor at the earliest possible moment. The notice of absence shall always be in advance unless conditions beyond

the control of the employee make such advance notice impossible. The employee must complete the sick leave form within five (5) working days of his/her return to duty. The sick leave form will be used as documentation to certify that the facts are true and correct, and that the claim is valid and legal. A false claim for sick leave shall be deemed cause for termination. When there is any doubt as to the validity of the claim, the Superintendent may require the claimant to file written certification of illness from a licensed physician.

School board policy allows any district employee to authorize the use of their accrued sick leave by their spouse, child, parent or sibling who is also a district employee. State law now mandates that school district employees can now donate their accrued sick leave to any other school district employee.

### **TEMPORARY DUTY**

Any employee may be granted temporary duty when officially assigned short-term professional duties away from the regular job site. Employees granted temporary duty shall receive their regular pay and may be allowed expenses as provided by law and Board Policy. A request for temporary duty is subject to the approval of the employee's immediate supervisor. A leave form for temporary duty is required. When taking students on a field trip, a leave form and field trip request form are required to be completed in advance. Temporary duty days need to be planned in advance and require approval of the employee's immediate supervisor and district staff.

### **VACATION LEAVE**

Vacation time off with pay is available to eligible employees to provide opportunities for rest, relaxation, and personal pursuits. An employee on less than a 12-month contract may earn no vacation leave.

The amount of paid vacation time employees receive each year increases with the length of their employment. Personnel employed on a full-time basis (12 months) shall earn annual leave per calendar year at the following rates:

- Less than 5 years – 18 days
- 5 to 10 years – 21 days
- Greater than 10 years – 24 days

Vacation leave shall accrue at the close of each month, in accordance with the maximum allowed, and may not exceed 480 working hours for a carryover at the end of the fiscal year.

To request vacation leave, the employee must get advance approval from his/her administrative supervisor, and it shall be scheduled as to cause a minimum disruption of the school program.

Upon termination, retirement, or participation in the Deferred Retirement Option Program an employee shall receive a lump sum payment for accrued vacation leave. If service is terminated by death, this benefit shall be paid to the employee's beneficiary.

## **CHAPTER 6 – PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

### **PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

All staff members will receive an annual evaluation by his/her immediate supervisor. The purpose of the evaluation shall be to improve the services of personnel in all departments. Instructional staff will be evaluated using the Teacher Evaluation System. Principals and assistant principals will be evaluated using the School Leader Evaluation System. District directors will be evaluated using the District Administrative Performance Appraisal. Support services staff will be evaluated using the Support Services Employee Performance Assessment. A copy of each employee's evaluation report shall be filed in the employee's personnel file.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Union County School District is committed to the development of its employees. Investments in people represent investments in our children and in our future. We believe the more you develop as a professional, the better our school system will become. As a result, we strive to provide many opportunities for professional development to our employees. Decisions regarding professional development should support the primary goal of improving instruction to improve learning. All instructional staff will participate in professional development activities at the direction of their principal. Requests to participate in professional development activities should be made to the principal. The District Office disseminates information concerning in-service training activities to each school, and keeps track of all in-service points for certification purposes.

## **CHAPTER 7 – EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION**

### **TEACHER OF THE YEAR**

Union County has participated in the Florida Teacher of the Year program for many years. This program is designed to recognize teachers and the teaching profession. We honor an educator from each school. This honor reflects the dedication and enthusiasm teachers bring to their students on a daily basis. The Union County Teacher of the Year serves as a spokesperson and ambassador for the teaching profession and our district.

### **SCHOOL-RELATED EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR**

The Florida School-Related Employee of the Year Program recognizes outstanding support personnel who have demonstrated exceptional skill and dedication in the performance of their jobs, thereby earning the respect and admiration of students, teachers, administrators, coworkers, and parents.

## **CHAPTER 8 – COMMUNICATIONS**

### **TELEPHONES AND FAXES**

School district communication equipment shall be used for designated purposes and shall not be used for personal or non-school purposes. An employee shall not make a personal long distance call or send a facsimile or other electronic transmission at School Board expense. An employee who violates this rule shall be required to pay for the call or facsimile. Such action shall be reported to the building supervisor. Prior authorization for all long distance calls and facsimiles must be received from the building supervisor.

### **TECHNOLOGY USE**

(1) General Policy and Guidelines:

Inappropriate use of the Internet by school district employees may result in disciplinary action and/or cancellation of user's privileges.

(2) Use of Internet, Wide Area Network, Local Area Networks, Computers, Social Media Sites and Related Technology:

(a) Use of a network must be in connection with education and research and be consistent with the educational purposes of the Union County School District. It is expected that integration of the curriculum will be used with technology, as well as, students being given guidance and instruction in the use of technology. Teachers' supervision and monitoring is required to maintain effective and safe use of these resources.

(b) Employees shall not use the school district's computer network to solicit sales or conduct business or shall not set up school related web pages for any reason without prior approval by a superintendent designee.

(c) Any use of a school network for private or personal gain is prohibited.

(d) Any use of a network for product advertisement or political lobbying is prohibited.

(e) Users shall not intentionally seek information or obtain copies of data or passwords or modify files belonging to other users or misrepresent other users on the network. Identifications and passwords are confidential.

(f) Employee's should have no expectation of privacy or confidentiality in the content of electronic communications or other computers files sent and received on the school computer network or stored in his/her directory. Sharing of personal information, such as name, address and phone number can compromise personal safety. The person in whose name a network account is issued is responsible at all times for its proper use. Employees may not use anyone else's password, nor may they share their password with others. The school computer network's system operator, or other designated School Board employee, may at any time, review the subject, content and appropriateness of electronic communications or other computer files, and remove them if warranted, reporting any violation of rules to the school administration or law enforcement officials.

(g) Neither hardware nor software shall be destroyed, modified or abused in any way.

(h) Malicious use of a network to harass other users or infiltrate a computer or computing system and/or damage the software components of a computer or computing system is prohibited. There should not be any electronic activity by school board

employee's that will compromise school facilities, be an interruption of the educational process, or cause undue work by school board employees.

(i) Hate mail, harassments, discriminatory remarks, profanity, obscenity or language, which is offensive to another user or other antisocial behaviors, are prohibited on the network.

(j) The network is protected by Internet filtering equipment that restricts user's access to materials that are consistent with the standards of selection of materials specified in Florida Statutes and with the educational mission, goals, and policies of the school district. These devices block visual displays that are obscene, pornographic or harmful to minors, but this technology is not 100% effective. Use of a network to access or process pornographic materials, inappropriate text files or files dangerous to the integrity of the local area network and/or the wide area network is prohibited. All student network access should be supervised at all times.

(k) The illegal installation of copyrighted software for use on any district computer is prohibited. Employees shall not copy and forward, copy and download, or copy and upload to the network or Internet server any copyrighted material, without approval by a school or district administrator.

(l) The user shall maintain the integrity of the school's/district's electronic mail system. The user is responsible to report all violations. The user is also responsible for making sure all e-mail sent by him/her does not contain sexually suggestive material, inappropriate information, an unsolicited chain email, or text-encoded files that are potentially dangerous to the integrity of the local area network or the Internet. Materials received which contains sexually suggestive material; inappropriate information, an unsolicited chain email, or text-encoded files that are dangerous to the integrity of the local area network or the Internet should be reported to an administrator immediately.

(m) Staff shall not infiltrate, or "hack", computing systems or networks (Examples: the release of viruses, worms or other programs that damage or otherwise harm an outside computing system or the internal network or not disrupt a system or interfere with another's ability to use that system. Financial and legal consequences of such actions are the responsibility of the user.

(n)The school district uses asset tracking software that can track school board devices.

(o) Social Media is defined in Policy 8.35. Please see for rules and guidelines regarding Social Media.

### (3) User Responsibility and Security:

The violations on the preceding pages are only representative. Other forms of misconduct arising from, or connected with, the use of the internet, local area or wide area networks may result in suspension and/or revocation of the offender's privilege of network access.

### (4) Disciplinary Action for Violation of Policy:

Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in disciplinary action. The severity of the violation will dictate the action of the principal. Disciplinary action for school district employees will be handled by the superintendent or designee.



## **CHAPTER 9 – ENDING EMPLOYMENT**

### **RESIGNATION**

Any staff member who wishes to resign shall submit his/her resignation in writing. The letter of resignation shall state the reasons for the resignation and the desired effective date. Whenever possible, two (2) weeks prior notice shall be given. The resignation shall be submitted to the School Board at its next regular meeting.

### **TERMINATION**

Terminations do occasionally happen. Termination is typically associated with some adverse action, either related to substandard performance, a pattern of misconduct, or a flagrant violation of a School Board rule, the code of ethics, or other disciplinary infraction.

### **RETIREMENT**

Any employee who plans to retire shall concurrently submit his/her retirement letter to the School Board and his/her application to the Florida Retirement System for benefits. Employees are encouraged to submit the retirement letter and application form at least 90 days in advance of the retirement date to ensure their retirement check is issued the month following the last month of service with the School Board.

### **DEFERRED RETIREMENT OPTION PLAN (DROP)**

The Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) is an alternative method of deferred payment of retirement benefits for up to 60 months after an eligible member of the Florida Retirement System reaches his/her normal retirement date but wishes to continue employment with a Florida Retirement System employer. In certain cases DROP may be extended past the 60 months. In order to participate, the employee must submit a binding letter of retirement, establishing a deferred termination date. An employee can later change the termination date to an earlier date, but not to a later termination date. DROP will allow the participant to defer all retirement benefits payable during the DROP period. Upon termination of DROP, the participant will receive the DROP benefits and their regular retirement benefits.

### **EXIT INTERVIEW**

At the end of your employment with the School Board you will be asked to complete an exit survey. We use the information in the exit survey for a number of things. Most importantly, we use the information to understand why people leave our organization and, in return, review our programs and policies to encourage long-term retention. Most preventable losses to any organization occur because of a perception of some negative impact on overall quality of life. We are convinced the better we understand those issues, the better we can respond with programs that improve the quality of life of our people and, in turn, improve our overall retention and experience levels.

## **CHAPTER 10 – CODE OF ETHICS**

The code of ethics governs professionalism through integrity and consists of those principles of professional conduct that govern the education profession in Florida. The State Board of Education approved the principles of professional conduct on July 21, 1992 (Rule 6B-1.006, FAC). Violation of any of the principles of professional conduct shall subject the individual to sanctions against the certificate, which may include revocation or suspension of the individual educator's certificate, or the other penalties as provided by law. All employees are encouraged to read, understand and become familiar with these principles (Rule 6B-1.00, FAC). Certified employees may become ineligible for employment should they commit any of the felonies or misdemeanors listed in FS. 1013.315.

### **THE CODE OF ETHICS AND THE PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT OF THE EDUCATION PROFESSION IN FLORIDA**

1. The following disciplinary rule shall constitute the Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida.
2. Violation of any of these principles shall subject the individual to revocation or suspension of the individual educator's certificate, or the other penalties as provided by law.
3. Obligation to the student requires that the individual:
  - a. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning and/or to the student's mental and/or physical health and/or safety.
  - b. Shall not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning.
  - c. Shall not unreasonably deny a student access to diverse points of view.
  - d. Shall not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program.
  - e. Shall not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
  - f. Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights.
  - g. Shall not harass or discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition, sexual orientation, or social and family background and shall make reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination.
  - h. Shall not exploit a relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage.

- i. Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional services, unless disclosure served professional purposes or is required by law.
4. Obligation to the public requires that the individual:
    - a. Shall take reasonable precautions to distinguish between personal views and those of any educational institution or organization with which the individual is affiliated.
    - b. Shall not intentionally distort or misrepresent facts concerning an educational matter in direct or indirect public expression.
    - c. Shall not use institutional privileges for personal gain or advantage.
    - d. Shall accept no gratuity, gift, or favor that might influence professional judgment.
    - e. Shall offer no gratuity, gift, or favor to obtain special advantages.
  5. Obligation to the profession of education requires that the individual:
    - a. Shall maintain honesty in all professional dealings.
    - b. Shall not on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition if otherwise qualified, or social and family background deny to a colleague professional benefits or advantages or participation in any professional organization.
    - c. Shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political or civil rights and responsibilities.
    - d. Shall not engage in harassment or discriminatory conduct which unreasonably interferes with an individual's performance of professional or work responsibilities or with the orderly processes of education or which creates a hostile, intimidating, abusive, offensive, or oppressive environment; and further, shall make reasonable effort to assure that each individual is protected from such harassment or discrimination.
    - e. Shall not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague.
    - f. Shall not use coercive means or promise special treatment to influence professional judgment of colleagues.
    - g. Shall not misrepresent one's own professional qualifications.
    - h. Shall not submit fraudulent information on any document in connection with professional activities.
    - i. Shall not make any fraudulent statement or fail to disclose a material fact in one's own or another's application for a professional position.
    - j. Shall not withhold information regarding a position from an applicant or misrepresent an assignment or conditions of employment.
    - k. Shall provide upon the request of the certified individual a written statement of specific reason for recommendations that lead to the denial of increments, significant changes in employment, or termination of employment.
    - l. Shall not assist entry into or continuance in the profession of any person known to be unqualified in accordance with these Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida and other applicable Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rules.
    - m. Shall self-report within 48 hours to appropriate authorities any arrests/charges involving the abuse of a child or the sale and/or possession of a controlled

substance. Such notice shall not be considered an admission of guilt nor shall such notice be admissible for any purpose in any proceeding, civil or criminal, administrative or judicial, investigatory or adjudicatory. Additionally, shall self-report any conviction, finding of guilt, withholding of adjudication, commitment to a pretrial diversion program, or entering of a plea of guilty or nolo contendere for any criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation within 48 hours after the final judgment. When handling sealed and expunged records disclosed under this rule, school districts shall comply with the confidentiality provisions of sections 943.0585(4)(c) and 943.059(4)(c), Florida Statutes.

- n. Shall report to appropriate authorities any known allegation of a violation of the Florida School Code or State Board of Education Rules as defined in Section 1013.795, Florida Statutes.
- o. Shall seek no reprisal against any individual who has reported any allegation of a violation of the Florida School Code or State Board of Education Rules as defined in Section 1013.795, Florida Statutes.
- p. Shall comply with the conditions of an order of the Education Practices Commission imposing probation, imposing a fine, or restricting the authorized scope of practice.
- q. Shall, as the supervising administrator, cooperate with the Education Practices Commission in monitoring the probation of a subordinate.

**State Board of Education Rule 6B-1.001, FAC**  
**The Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in Florida**

1. The educator values the worth and dignity of every person, the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, acquisition of knowledge, and the nurture of democratic citizenship. Essential to the achievement of these standards are the freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal opportunity for all.
2. The educator's primary professional concern will always be for the student and for the development of the student's potential. The educator will therefore strive for professional growth and will seek to exercise the best professional judgment and integrity.
3. The educator must be aware of the importance of maintaining the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents, and of other members of the community, the educator strives to achieve and sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct.