

WAYNE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2017-2018 Employee Handbook

A Guide for Our Employees



*Cultivation, Personalization, Innovation -
Every Student Every Day!*

Wayne County Public Schools
Employee Handbook
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document has been developed by the Human Resources Department (HR) in order to familiarize employees with the Wayne County Public Schools (WCPS) and to provide information about working conditions, key policies, procedures, and benefits affecting employment with our school district.

WCPS BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

| | |
|------------|---|
| District 1 | Mr. Don Christopher West |
| District 2 | Mr. H. Len Henderson |
| District 3 | Ms. Patricia A. Burden |
| District 4 | Mrs. Jennifer S. Strickland, Vice Chair |
| District 5 | Mr. Arnold L. Flowers, Chair |
| District 6 | Mr. Richard W. Pridgen |
| At - Large | Mr. Raymond E. Smith, Jr. |

1.1 Welcome to WCPS: Superintendent's Message

As the 21st largest public school district in the state, Wayne County Public Schools and the Wayne County Board of Education are entrusted with the care and education of approximately 19,000 students across 32 campuses. With approximately 3,000 people employed annually, every WCPS employee is important, both individually and to the collective advancement of our school district's mission.

This Staff Handbook is an excellent resource for helping you better understand your role and responsibilities as a WCPS employee. It also details our school district's responsibilities to you as an employee. I would highly encourage you to review it and refer back to it as needed.

As we enter the 2017-2018 school year, remember that our ultimate job is to prepare students for college, the workforce and/or the military, and ultimately to become productive citizens. Regardless of position, every WCPS employee has a vital role in ensuring the success of our students. All employees should strive for excellence in their daily jobs and support our school district in its efforts to sustain a safe, orderly, and inviting environment for every student and staff member to learn and/or work.

Please familiarize yourself with the information within this Staff Handbook. If you have any questions about it or about your role as a WCPS employee, please feel free to contact our Human Resources Department for assistance.

On behalf of our school district and our board of education, thank you for all that you do as an employee and for all that you do to support our students. Have a wonderful school year!



Dr. Michael J. Dunsmore, Superintendent
Wayne County Public Schools

1.2 Human Resources Staff Members and Responsibilities

Dr. Yvette S. Mason
Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources/ Professional Development

Tony Howell
HR Classified Support Specialist
Administrative Assistant
tonyhowell@wcps.org
919-705-6106

Processes Classified Employees

Cassie Parker
HR Specialist
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Substitute/SmartFind Co-Operator
Retirement
Teacher of the Year
CEU Credits in TimeKeeper
NCID Operator
Loan Forgiveness Forms
Lead People Admin Operator

Bianca Pineda
HR Specialist
biancapineda@wcps.org
919-705-6169

Disability Leave
Voluntary Shared Leave
Maternity Leave
Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
Employment Verification

Chianti Pounds
HR Classified Support Specialist
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Employee Assistance Program Support
Processes Classified Employees

1.2 Human Resources Staff Members and Responsibilities

Tennille Spruill

Licensure Specialist

tennillespruill@wcps.org

919-705-6036

Processes Certified Employees

NCDPI Licensure Support

Lateral Entry Support

Plan of Study Support

Wanda Winders

Licensure Specialist

wandawinders@wcps.org

919-705-6133

Processes Certified Employees

NCDPI Licensure Support

Lateral Entry Support

Plan of Study Support

Shelvia Yelverton

HR Receptionist

shelviayelverton@wcps.org

919-705-6179

Job Postings

Administrative Assistant

Resignations/Departure Forms

Substitute/SmartFind Co-Operator

Lateral Entry/Praxis Reimbursement(s)

General HR Questions

Provides Requested Employment Files

Lead PeopleAdmin Operator

1.2 Human Resources Staff Members and Responsibilities

Wanda Winders

Serves Certified Staff for:

Tony Howell

Serves Classified Staff for:

Brogden Middle (BMS)
Brogden Primary (BPS)
Carver Elementary (CAR)
Carver Heights Elementary (CHS)
Charles B. Aycock High (CBA)
Dillard Middle (DIL)
Eastern Wayne Elementary (EWE)
Eastern Wayne High (EWH)
Eastern Wayne Middle (EWM)
Edgewood Community Developmental (EDG)
Fremont STARS (FRE)
Grantham Elementary (GRAE)
Grantham Middle (GRAM)
Greenwood Middle (GWD)
Meadow Lane Elementary (MLE)
Child Nutrition, Exceptional Children, Maintenance, and Operations Departments

Tennille Spruill

Serves Certified Staff for:

Chianti Pounds

Serves Classified Staff for:

Goldsboro High (GHS)
Mount Olive Middle (MOM)
North Drive Elementary (NDE)
Northeast Elementary (NEE)
Northwest Elementary (NWE)
Norwayne Middle (NOR)
Rosewood Elementary (RWE)
Rosewood High (RWH)
Rosewood Middle (RWM)
School Street Elementary (SSE)
Southern Wayne High (SWH)
Spring Creek Elementary (SPCE)
Spring Creek High (SPCH)
Spring Creek Middle (SPCM)
Tommy's Road Elementary (TRE)
Wayne Early/Middle College High (WEMCH)
Wayne Middle/ High School Academy (WMHA)
Wayne School of Engineering (WSE)
Central Office, Technology, and Transportation Departments

1.3 WCPS Employee Handbook Disclaimer

This handbook is intended to be a guide for all employees regarding policies and procedures utilized by WCPS. The Wayne County Board of Education (BOE) reserves the right to unilaterally change, terminate and/or make exceptions to the policies in this handbook at any time to the extent permitted by law. Nothing in this handbook grants employment rights beyond those granted by state laws.

In addition, this handbook and acknowledgement statement should not be considered an agreement, a contract of employment, either expressed or implied, or a promise of treatment in any particular manner in any given situation.

All BOE policies can be found at www.waynecountyschools.org under the Administration tab.

1.4 WCPS Vision, Mission, and Beliefs

Vision

Cultivation, Personalization, Innovation – Every Student, Every Day!

Mission

The WCPS holds high expectations for all students by collaborating with parents and the community to provide individualized support.

Beliefs

1. The education of children is a priority and is the responsibility of the entire community.
2. Education is a sound investment for society and a key to ending the cycle of poverty.
3. Understanding and respecting cultural diversity enriches the learning environment.
4. All students deserve a quality education.
5. Learning is a lifelong process.

1.5 Equal Employment Opportunity

Wayne County Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities.

Refer to: [Board Policy Code 7101](#)

1.6 Employee Code of Excellence

For students to succeed, all school employees must approach their responsibilities conscientiously, always remembering that the ultimate responsibility of the school system is to provide students with the opportunity to receive a sound basic education.

All school employees will be required to read and review Wayne County Board of Education Employee Code of Excellence. In addition all new and current employees will be required to read, and review [AR 7300](#) page 1 and sign page 2. A copy of Acknowledgement will be filed in employee's personnel record.

1.7 Acknowledgement Statement

My signature below signifies that I have received and read the referenced Board of Education (BOE) policies in the 2017-2018 Wayne County Public Schools *Employee Handbook* and *Employee Code of Excellence*. Furthermore, my signature indicates that I understand all content; I realize that it is not all inclusive; it is my responsibility to read all BOE policies that are not part of the handbook; and I have access to an electronic version that is available at www.waynecountyschools.org. In addition, I understand that this acknowledgement statement will become part of my personnel file. Lastly, I understand that violations of this handbook and BOE policies may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

(Employee Signature- Legal Name)

(Employee Printed Legal Name)

Work Site & Position

(Employee ID/5-digit LINQ#)

(Date Signed)

2.0 CLASSIFICATION OF PERSONNEL

Due to the many nuances of public school employment, it is best to contact an HR Specialist to fully understand your classification.

Employees of WCPS are classified as either exempt or non-exempt from Fair Labor Standards. This is necessary because, by law, employees in certain types of jobs are entitled to overtime pay for hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours per workweek. Public schools are allowed to provide compensatory time in lieu of overtime pay for non-exempt (classified) employees.

Permanent Employee: A permanent employee is an employee who is employed to fill a position that is to be permanent if needs and funds continue or is employed for at least six full consecutive months either to replace one or more employees who are on an approved leave of absence without pay or to fill a vacancy until a qualified replacement is employed. A person employed for at least six full consecutive months is eligible to receive full or pro-rata benefits. Therefore, the eligibility for benefits must be determined at the time of the initial assignment or when the assignment status changes.

Permanent employees may be employed full-time or part-time. The regular work week of a permanent employee must be at least 20 hours per week. Permanent employees who work at least 30 hours per week must be enrolled in the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System (TSERS) and will receive employer-paid medical insurance for self.

Permanent employees do not lose permanent status during any period of temporary or interim assignment to another position in the same school system when it is anticipated that the employee will be returned to the permanent position.

Part-Time Employee: A part-time employee is an employee who regularly works at least 20 hours per week, but less than the number of hours set as full-time for that class of work. The part-time employee is not eligible to earn paid leave and does not participate in the retirement system. He/she does not receive nor can he/she purchase health benefits through the State Health Plan. Part-time employees may not use leave earned during any previous employment.

Full-Time Employee: A full-time employee is an employee whose regular work week is the number of hours established as full-time for the class of work assigned but not less than 30 hours per week. Two or more part-time assignments with the same school district may be combined to satisfy requirements to become a full-time employee. An employee working in two or more positions may not earn more benefits than those allowed for a single, full-time position.

Temporary Employee: A temporary employee is a person who is either employed to fill a position whose work week is less than 20 hours per week or is employed for less than six full consecutive months of employment. Temporary employees may be classified as full-time or part-time. They are not eligible to earn paid leave and do not participate in the retirement system. They do not receive nor can they purchase health benefits through the State Health Plan. Temporary employees may not use leave earned during any previous employment.

Interim Employee: An interim employee is a person employed to fill a position that is temporarily vacant and is being held for an incumbent who is expected to return from an approved leave. An interim employee is not eligible to earn paid leave and does not participate in the retirement system. He/she does not receive nor can he/she purchase health benefits through the State Health Plan. Interim employees may not use leave earned during any previous employment.

At-Will Employees: Employees who are not required to be employed under contracts or who are not offered contracts by the Board's prerogative are at-will employees. Examples include most non-certified personnel such as custodians, bus drivers, teacher assistants, clerical staff, maintenance supervisors, and transportation coordinators. Administrators not required by statute to be employed under contract are also at-will employees (unless the Board has chosen to offer contracts).

3.0 EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

3.1 General Guidelines

All school system employees hold positions of public trust. They are responsible for the education of students and also serve as examples and role models to students. Each employee is responsible for both the integrity and the consequences of his or her own actions. Each employee must exhibit the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and fairness when engaging in any activity concerning the school system, particularly in relationships with vendors, suppliers, students, parents, the public, and other employees. Employee conduct should be to protect the person's integrity and/or reputation and that of the school system.

Employees shall perform their jobs in a competent and ethical manner without violating the public trust or applicable laws, policies, and regulations. It shall be the employee's responsibility to familiarize him/herself with the rules and procedures associated with this handbook and all WCPS policies.

3.2 Criminal Records Check

All employees recommended for hire are subject to criminal records and sex offender registry checks.

Refer to: [Board Policy Code 7100](#)

3.3 Reporting Arrest(s)

Employees must notify the Assistant Superintendent of HR immediately and in writing if they are arrested, charged with, or convicted of a criminal offense (including entering a plea of guilty or *nolo contendere*) other than a minor traffic violation (i.e., speeding, parking or a lesser violation). Reporting must occur no later than the next scheduled business day.

Refer to: Board Policy Codes [7100](#) and [7300](#)

3.4 Recruitment and Selection of Personnel

All applicants selected for employment must be recommended by the superintendent and approved by the Board. State guidelines must be followed in selection and employment procedures. The superintendent shall develop procedures for verifying new employees' legal status or authorization to work in the United States as required by IRS form I-9. No administrative or supervisory personnel may directly supervise a member of his or her immediate family.

Refer to: Board Policy Codes [7100](#) and [7102](#)

3.5 Application Information

Information entered on applications shall be true and accurate. Falsifying information or concealing the truth will lead to terminating the application process or result in termination of employment.

Refer to: [Board Policy Code 7110](#)

3.6 Drug and Alcohol-Free Learning Environment and Workplace for Staff

It is the policy of the Wayne County Board of Education that a drug-free workplace be maintained. Procedures for handling suspected drug and/or alcohol use are outlined in Board policy.

Refer to: [Board Policy Code 7240](#)

3.7 Drug and Alcohol Testing

WCPS [conducts](#) post-accident drug and alcohol testing. Testing applies to all employees including but not limited to commercial vehicle drivers.

Refer to: Board Policy Code [7240](#) and [7241](#)

3.8 Tobacco Free Schools

The use of tobacco products on school grounds, in school buildings and facilities, or on any other school property owned or operated by the school board, or at school-related or school-sponsored events are prohibited. This includes but is not limited to staff and students.

Refer to: [Board Policy Code 7250](#)

3.9 Staff-Student Relations

The Board of Education expects all employees to maintain the highest ethical, moral, and professional standards in their interactions with students, including electronic communications. Employees and students must report inappropriate conduct.

Refer to: [Board Policy Code 7310](#)

3.10 Acceptable Use of Electronic Resources

WCPS makes appropriate electronic information resources available to employees to assist in furthering educational goals, to support valid business uses, and to provide for efficient work-related communication. The acceptable use policy governs the utilization of WCPS electronic information resources and defines employees' proper conduct and responsibilities while using any WCPS electronic information resource. Electronic information resources include all Wayne County Public Schools' computer equipment, including any desktop or laptop computers or other hardware owned or leased by the school system; the WCPS computer network; e-mail accounts; any computer software licensed to WCPS; and stored data. Inappropriate use of electronic resources subjects employees to disciplinary matters.

Refer to: [Board Policy Code 7335](#)

3.11 Employee Dress Code

Employees must adhere to standards of dress that are compatible with learning and work environments. Guidelines apply to times that students are in school and when employees are representing the school district.

Refer to: [Board Policy Code 7340](#)

3.12 Employee Transfers

The Superintendent, with full but legal discretion, is responsible for transfers and work assignments. In-school transfers are the Principal's responsibility. Transfers are either voluntary or involuntary. Voluntary transfers follow specific guidelines and occur during a specific time for the following school year.

Refer to: [Board Policy Code 7440](#)

3.13 Conflict of Interest

Employees want to avoid any type of conduct or behavior that could create the perception of a conflict of interest. Examples include, but are not limited to, soliciting or receiving gifts from a vendor that could influence contract selection; outside work that interferes with primary employment with the WCPS; or leading a private business during school time or on school property.

Refer to: [Board Policy Code 7730](#)

3.14 Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying; Sexual Harassment; Retaliation

The Board acknowledges the dignity and worth of all students and employees and strives to create a safe, orderly, caring, and inviting school environment to facilitate student learning and achievement. The Board prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age. The Board will not tolerate any form of unlawful discrimination, harassment (including of a sexual nature), or bullying in any of its educational or employment activities or programs. Procedures to file a complaint are contained in Board policy. Furthermore, the Board does not tolerate reprisal or retaliation against any employees who report violations of law, policies, or regulations.

Refer to: Board Policy Codes [1710](#), [1720](#), and [1760](#)

4.0 WORK ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Grievance Procedure

The WCPS offers a detailed procedure to all employees as a means to resolve difficulties and problems that may arise in work sites between an employee and his/her supervisor. The difficulties or problems must have an adverse effect on the employee.

Refer to: [Board Policy Code 7220](#)

4.2 Workday

Licensed employees work 7.5 hours/day; however, conferences, meetings, and/or extracurricular activities require workdays beyond the previously stated minimum. Classified or hourly employees work the hours indicated by the vacancy announcement under which they were hired, not to exceed 40 hours/week.

Classified or hourly employees work under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Refer to: [Board Policy Code 7500](#)

4.3 Inclement Weather

The Superintendent is responsible for procedures related to the temporary closing of schools due to inclement weather, taking into consideration the health, safety, and welfare of all students and employees.

Refer to: [Board Policy Code 7550](#)

4.4 Evaluation of Licensed Employees; Growth and Improvement Plans

Licensed employees are evaluated according to State Board Policy on five (5) standards through an electronic, state-developed format. Ratings range from Not Demonstrated to Distinguished. A Professional Development Plan (PDP) is part of the evaluation process also. For teachers with less than three (3) years of experience, there is a peer observation component. When deficiencies exist, improvement plans (Monitored; Individual; Mandatory) are developed and implemented to help the employee reach at least a proficient level of performance.

Refer to: Board Policy Codes [7810](#) and [7811](#)

4.5 Evaluation of Non-Licensed Employees; Improvement Plans

Non-licensed employees are evaluated on locally developed instruments. When deficiencies exist, improvement plans (Action Plans) are developed and implemented to help the employee reach at least a satisfactory level of performance.

Refer to: [Board Policy Code 7815](#)

4.6 Personnel Files

Employees can view their personnel files with three (3) days' notice. Conversely, employees are not able to review confidential information, such as reference forms. Some information contained in a personnel file is available to the public, upon request. A process is available to employees to request that documents be removed from their personnel file.

Refer to: Board Policy Codes [7820](#) and [7821](#)

4.7 Resignations

To ensure a smooth transition in services, a 30-day written resignation will be accepted for certified staff. A 2-week written resignation will be accepted for classified staff. The Superintendent or his designee only can approve a shorter notice.

Refer to: [Board Policy Code 7900](#)

4.8 Reduction in Force

When there is a decline in enrollment, reorganization, or financial emergencies, a Reduction in Force (RIF) may be implemented. Criteria and procedures are presented to the Board and to employees before implementation.

Refer to: Board Policy Codes [7920](#) and [7921](#)

4.9 Demotion or Dismissal of Licensed Employees

With adequate assistance, documentation, and written notices to an employee, there are fifteen (15) reasons for which a licensed employee can be demoted or dismissed.

Refer to: [Board Policy Code 7930](#)

4.10 Suspension and Dismissal of Classified Employees

When performance problems arise, supervisors must notify classified employees in writing along with documented opportunities to improve. Depending on the misconduct or infraction, employee suspension is a possibility. Remembering that North Carolina is an “at will” state, classified employees can be dismissed for non-discriminatory reasons.

Refer to: [Board Policy Code 7940](#)

4.11 Non-Renewal of Non-Career Teachers

The Board may refuse to renew the contract of any non-career status teacher for any cause it deems sufficient, so long as the cause is not arbitrary, capricious, discriminatory, prohibited by state or federal law, or for personal or political reasons.

Refer to: [Board Policy Code 7950](#)

5.0 BENEFITS

WCPS sponsors a comprehensive benefits program for eligible employees, and each benefit plan has specific eligibility conditions. All full-time permanent employees will enjoy all of the benefits described below as soon as they meet all of the eligibility requirements for each particular benefit. Permanent part-time employees may be eligible for certain benefits if they meet the eligibility conditions.

5.1 State Health Plan

The State Health Plan, administered through Blue Cross Blue Shield, offers several plans from which to choose. Costs vary, depending on the plan selected. The premium is deducted monthly from your paycheck. Ten-month employees pay for twelve months of insurance coverage in ten (10) equal payments during the August-May paychecks.

5.2 Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The Wayne County Board of Education is committed to maintaining and strengthening its most important resource - its employees. The Board recognizes that many kinds of personal problems that affect job performance can be readily resolved if they are properly identified, diagnosed, and treated. To accomplish this goal, the Board has made available an Employee Assistance Program through REACH to provide confidential short-term counseling and referral services for eligible employees and their immediate family members. The establishment of this program reflects the Board's concern for the well-being of its employees, as well as its dedication to the effective accomplishment of the objectives of the school system. For confidential and professional assistance call REACH at 1-800-950-3434 or www.reach-eap.com.

5.3 Retirement Plan

The State of North Carolina provides a solid retirement plan to eligible permanent public school employees. This is a defined benefit retirement plan. This means, after an employee meets the eligibility requirements to retire, and retires, a benefit will be calculated, which the employee will receive every month until his/her death. Information is available at www.myncretirement.com.

5.4 Annual Vacation Leave

The purpose of paid annual vacation leave is to allow and encourage all employees to renew their physical and mental capabilities and to remain fully productive. Employees are encouraged to request annual vacation leave during each year in order to achieve this purpose. Annual vacation leave is earned as outlined below:

Example: 8 Hour/Per Day Work Schedule

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Years of State Service | Monthly Full-Time | 12-Month Full-Time |
|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|

| | Accrual Rates | Accrual Rates |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Less than 5 Years | 1.17 days (9.36 hours) | 14 days (112 hours) |
| 5 but less than 10 Years | 1.42 days (11.36 hours) | 17 days (136 hours) |
| 10 but less than 15 Years | 1.67 days (13.36 hours) | 20 days (160 hours) |
| 15 but less than 20 Years | 1.92 days (15.36 hours) | 23 days (184 hours) |
| 20 Years or More | 2.17 days (17.36 hours) | 26 days (208 hours) |

Using Annual Vacation Leave

(a) For 10-month employees, the first 10 days of annual vacation leave must be scheduled in the school calendar and must be taken as scheduled.

(b) Approval: All annual vacation leave taken by a public school employee must be with the authorization of the employee's immediate supervisor and must conform to policies established by the State Board of Education and the local school district.

(c) Units of annual vacation leave: Annual vacation leave may be used in one-half days, whole days, or hours as determined for earning purposes by the local Board.

(d) Restrictions on use by instructional personnel and teacher assistants: Classroom teachers who require a substitute, school media coordinators who require a substitute, and teacher assistants who require a substitute may not take annual vacation leave at any time that students are scheduled to be in attendance except as provided in Leave for Catastrophic Illness or Leave for New Parents. Teachers who do not require a substitute may, with their supervisor's approval, take annual vacation leave on any day school is in session.

(e) Annual vacation leave in lieu of sick leave: Annual vacation leave may be used in lieu of sick leave. Instructional personnel who require substitutes are subject to the restrictions set forth in paragraph (d) above.

(f) Adverse weather: Employees may elect to use annual vacation leave for absences due to adverse weather conditions only on days when students are not required to attend school due to the adverse weather conditions.

(g) Disability: Employees may elect to exhaust annual vacation leave during the 60-day waiting period or in lieu of short-term disability benefits. Instructional personnel who require substitutes may use this leave only on days that students are not scheduled to be in regular attendance or in accordance with the provisions of Leave for Catastrophic Illness or Leave for New Parents. This election does not extend the 365-day duration of short-term disability.

Accumulating and Converting to Sick Leave

- Annual vacation leave may be accumulated without any applicable maximum until June 30 of each calendar year. On June 30 or upon retirement, accumulated annual vacation leave in excess of 30 days will be converted to sick leave so that only 30 workdays of annual vacation leave are carried forward.
- Upon separation in order to retire, annual vacation leave over 30 days may be converted to sick leave for creditable service toward retirement.
- Upon separation from service due to service retirement, resignation, (if not transferring to another school district within 31 calendar days), dismissal, reduction in force or death, an employee shall be paid in a lump sum for accumulated annual vacation leave not to

exceed a maximum of 30 days. Employees going onto disability may exhaust annual vacation leave rather than be paid in a lump sum.

5.5 Sick Leave

Who is Eligible to Earn Sick Leave and How Much is Earned?

- (a) Full-time employees: All permanent, full-time employees working or on paid leave (including paid holidays and workers' compensation) for one-half or more of the workdays in any monthly pay period earn one sick day per month or the number of hours worked daily by a full-time employee in that class of work up to a maximum of eight hours.
- (b) Part-time employees: All permanent, part-time employees working or on paid leave (including paid holidays and workers' compensation) for one-half or more of the workdays in any monthly pay period earn sick leave computed on a pro rata basis of the amount earned by a full-time employee in that class of work. Permanent, part-time employees previously employed in a full-time position retain the balance of sick leave earned in the prior position upon transferring to a part-time position.
- (c) Units: Sick leave must be used in one-half days, whole days, or hours as determined for earning purposes by the local board. Only sick leave taken on an employee's workday shall be deducted from the employee's sick leave balance.
- (d) Accumulation: Sick leave may be accumulated indefinitely.

When Can Sick Leave Be Used?

Sick leave may be used for:

- (a) Any actual period of temporary disability caused by or contributed to by personal illness or injury, which prevents an employee from performing his or her usual duties. Sick leave due to pregnancy, miscarriage, abortion, childbirth, or postnatal recovery must be treated in the same manner as any other temporary disability. Sick leave may be used during the 60-day waiting period for short-term disability to supplement, or in lieu of, short-term disability benefits. Sick leave may also be used to supplement, or in lieu of, workers' compensation to maintain 100% salary.
- (b) Up to 30 days of earned sick leave may also be used to care for a child placed with an employee for adoption. (These days should be consecutive and within the first 12 months following the adoption, unless otherwise agreed upon between the employee and the school district administration.) Note: the foster care benefit is afforded under FMLA and is not designated in state policy.
- (c) Medical appointments of the employee.
- (d) Illness in the immediate family and medical appointments related to the illness that necessitates the employee's attendance.
- (e) Death in the immediate family.

- (f) The length of leave granted for illness or death in the immediate family is determined by the school district based on individual employee need.
- (g) Whenever possible, employees should give 30 days' advance notice of plans to take sick leave for elective medical or surgical procedures or for childbirth.
- (h) Military caregivers may choose to exhaust available sick and/or vacation/bonus leave, or any portion, or go on leave without pay to care for an injured family member.
- (i) Employees may use vacation leave or go on leave without pay for military exigencies subject to the terms and conditions of the employer's normal leave policy. Military exigencies do not qualify for the use of sick leave, unless medically necessary.

Verification of Needing Sick Leave

The superintendent or designee may require a statement from a medical doctor or other acceptable proof that the employee was unable to work due to personal illness, medical appointment, illness or death in the family, or adoption.

Sick Leave Limitations

Sick leave may not be used while on leave without pay or on holidays and annual vacation leave days scheduled in the school calendar. An absence covered by workers' compensation is not considered to be a leave without pay. Sick leave may be used on any workday or student day including the first day employees in permanent positions report to work. An employee, who is not eligible to earn leave, cannot use previously accumulated leave.

What Happens to My Sick Leave When I Leave WCPS?

- (a) Pay for unused sick leave is not permitted, except when an employee has been approved for long-term disability.
- (b) Accumulated sick leave counts as creditable service towards retirement. One month of credit is allowed for each 20 days of unused sick leave upon retirement. One more month is allowed for any part of 20 days left over. Sick leave converted from excess annual vacation leave is also creditable.
- (c) From the date an employee resigns or moves to a temporary position, the sick leave balance is retained for 60 or 63 months. (In order to have 63 months, the individual must have separated under a 10 months contract and returned to employment under a 10 months contract.) If the person is re-employed in a full-time or part-time permanent position, or retires within this 60 or 63 months, the sick leave balance is reinstated. After this point, the sick leave balance cannot be reinstated.
- (d) Unused sick leave must be transferred between local school districts.
- (e) Sick leave may be transferred in whole or in part to and from a state agency, institution, community college, technical institute, or position covered by the State Personnel Act in county agencies of mental health, public health, social services, or emergency management if the receiving agency is willing to accept the leave. If the government agency refuses to accept sick leave earned by a school system employee, there is no lump-sum payout to the employee.
- (f) There is no provision for public school employees to transfer leave to or from charter schools. The sick leave will be retained by the school district and reinstated if the employee returns to work there.

5.6 Extended Sick Leave

Who is Eligible for Extended Sick Leave and How Much is Earned?

Extended sick leave is available to classroom teachers and media coordinators who require substitutes if they are absent due to their own personal illness or injury and have exhausted all available accumulated paid leave (sick leave, annual vacation leave, and bonus leave). In order to be eligible, the employee must be in a permanent full- or part-time position. Those qualifying are allowed extended sick leave of up to 20 workdays throughout the regular (annual) term of employment.

How Can Extended Sick Leave Be Used?

- (a) In order for a newly hired employee to be eligible for extended sick leave, he or she must have reported to work.
- (b) The local school system may request appropriate medical verification of the need for extended sick leave.
- (c) Extended sick leave days do not have to be used consecutively.
- (d) Unused extended sick leave days do not carry forward to succeeding school years.
- (e) Extended sick leave is not available beyond the waiting period of Workers' Compensation or Short Term Disability.

Is There a Payroll Deduction for Using Extended Sick Leave?

Employees on extended sick leave receive full salary less the required substitute deduction. The deduction is mandatory whether or not a substitute is employed. The standard deduction is \$50 per day.

5.7 Voluntary Shared Leave

What is the Purpose of Voluntary Shared Leave?

The purpose of voluntary shared leave is to provide economic relief for employees who are likely to suffer financial hardship because of a prolonged absence or frequent short-term absences caused by a serious medical condition.

Who is Eligible for Voluntary Shared Leave?

Only full-time and part-time permanent employees who have exhausted all available accumulated paid leave (sick leave, annual vacation leave, and bonus leave, if applicable) are eligible to receive donated leave. An employee need not exhaust personal leave and the 20 days of extended sick leave to be eligible for voluntary shared leave. Only employees in permanent (leave earning) status can participate in the voluntary shared leave program. An employee who is receiving benefits or is eligible to receive benefits from the Disability Income Plan is not

eligible to receive donated leave. Voluntary shared leave may be used only during the required waiting period. The superintendent shall approve or deny all requests for receipt of donated leave.

If Needed, How Would I Apply for Voluntary Shared Leave?

An employee, who, due to a serious medical condition of self or of his or her immediate family and faces prolonged or frequent absences from work, may apply to the superintendent for donated leave. Application may also be made by a third person acting on the employee's behalf, if the employee is unable to complete an application. An employee may complete an application for shared leave at such time as medical evidence is available to support the need for leave beyond the employee's available accumulated leave.

The following items must be included in the application:

1. A doctor's statement and
2. An authorization for release of medical information signed by the person who is suffering the medical condition (or parent or guardian of a minor). This release may also be signed by any legally authorized party.

Can Immediate Family Members Donate Voluntary Shared Leave?

An employee of an NC public school system may donate vacation/bonus or sick leave to an immediate family member, who is eligible to receive shared leave, in any public school, state agency, or community college. An eligible employee of a public school system may receive vacation/bonus and/or sick leave from an immediate family member in any NC public school system, state agency, or community college. Bonus leave may also be donated. There is no provision for public school employees to donate leave to or receive leave from employees or family members in charter schools or in county agencies of mental health, public health, social services, or emergency management including those covered by the State Personnel Act. Employees who donate sick leave shall be notified in writing of the State retirement credit consequences of donating sick leave. Donors may not reduce their leave balance(s) below one-half of what can be earned in a year.

Are Non-Family Members Eligible to Donate Voluntary Shared Leave?

A school district employee may donate the following leave to a non-family member:

1. An employee may donate vacation or bonus leave to an employee of the same or another school district. (Sick leave can be donated under the provisions of #3 below.)
2. An employee may donate vacation or bonus leave to a coworker's immediate family who is an employee in a state agency or community college.
3. An employee of a school district may donate sick leave to a non-family member in the same or another school district under the following provisions:
 - i. The donor shall not donate more than five days of sick leave per year to any one non-family member;

- ii. The combined total of sick leave donated to a recipient from non-family member donors shall not exceed 20 days per year;
- iii. Donated sick leave shall not be used for retirement purposes;
- iv. Donors may not reduce their sick leave balances below one-half of what can be earned in a year; and
- v. Employees who donate sick leave shall be notified in writing of the State retirement credit consequences of donating sick leave.

There is no provision for public school employees to donate leave to or receive leave from employees in charter schools or in county agencies of mental health, public health, social services, or emergency management including those covered by the State Personnel Act.

Are There Special Facts I Need to Know About Voluntary Shared Leave?

Approved school district employees may receive sick leave from both family members and non-family in NC public school districts. The combined total of sick leave received from non-family members **shall not exceed 20 days per year**. Approved NC public school district employees may receive sick leave only from immediate family members in community college institutions and state agencies. Donated sick leave shall not be used for retirement purposes. All donations must be in writing and must be signed by the donating employee. The employee receiving the leave must be named and the amount and type of leave donated must be specified. The minimum amount of leave donated must be one-half of a day. The donating employee may not receive compensation in any form for the donation of leave. Local boards shall adopt policies stating that acceptance of remuneration for donated leave will result in dismissal. An employee **may normally receive no more than 130 workdays of donated leave**, either continuously or for the same condition on a recurring basis. After 130 workdays have been used, the superintendent may extend this limit on a month-to-month basis until the maximum number of working days occurring between the first day of use of donated leave and twelve months have been used. (This provision is only available for those that are not eligible for short term disability).

Do I earn annual vacation and sick leave while using voluntary shared leave? Am I paid for holidays?

Holidays occurring while the employee is using donated leave will be paid. Annual vacation and sick leave will continue to be earned by the employee while he or she is using donated leave. Available earned leave accrued during this period must be used by the employee prior to continued use of any voluntary shared leave.

What happens to leftover voluntary shared leave?

At the expiration of the period approved for voluntary shared leave as determined by the superintendent, any unused donated leave must be returned on a pro rata basis to the donors.

5.8 Disability Income Plan; Short and Long-Term Disability

The Disability Income Plan of North Carolina is administered by the North Carolina Department of the State Treasurer and the Board of Trustees of the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System (TSERS) within the terms and conditions of the Plan as set forth in the North Carolina General Statutes.

For employees vested in the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System after July 1, 2003, definitions of disability and disabled have been revised. Employees and employers need to contact the Retirement System to determine whether situations meet the requirements for the Disability Income Plan.

What is short-term disability and who is eligible for the benefit?

Employees with at least one year of contributing membership service with the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System (TSERS) earned within 36 calendar months preceding the disability are eligible for short-term disability benefits.

After a waiting period of 60 continuous calendar days from the onset of a disability, an eligible employee may receive a monthly short-term benefit equal to 50% of 1/12th of his or her annual base rate of compensation plus 50% of 1/12th of his or her annual longevity payment, if any, to a maximum of \$3,000 per month. A person in receipt of short-term disability benefits is covered under the Teachers' and State Employees' Comprehensive Major Medical Plan, with the State contributing the cost of employee-only coverage, provided the person had contributed to the Retirement System at least five years as a public school or state employee at the time of disability. A person in receipt of benefits who did not meet the five year requirement at the time of disability may elect to continue coverage under the Major Medical Plan by paying the full premium required. Short-term disability benefits may be extended for as many as 365 days beyond the original short-term period in cases where the Medical Board finds that the disability continues to be temporary and is likely to end during the extended period.

What is long-term disability and how does it work?

Employees with at least five years of contributing membership service with the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System (TSERS), earned within 96 calendar months prior to the end of the short-term disability period, are eligible for long-term disability benefits.

Long-term disability payments are payable after the conclusion of the short-term disability period. During the first 36 months of the long-term disability period, the monthly long-term benefit will equal 65% of 1/12th of the employee's annual base rate of compensation that was last payable prior to the beginning of the short-term benefit period to a maximum of \$3,900 per month. After the first 36 months of the long-term disability period, the long-term benefit is reduced by an amount equal to the primary Social Security disability benefit to which the employee might be entitled had he or she been awarded Social Security disability benefits. A person in receipt of long-term disability benefits is covered under the Teachers' and State Employees' Comprehensive Major Medical Plan, with the State contributing the cost of

employee-only coverage. An employee approved for long-term disability benefits must terminate employment as a permanent employee prior to receiving long-term disability benefits. An employee approved for long-term disability benefits who has not exhausted accumulated sick leave must be paid a lump sum for any available sick leave, if the employee is unable to apply the sick leave toward retirement.

5.9 Personal Leave

Who earns personal leave and how much is earned?

Personal leave is earned by classroom teachers and school media coordinators who require substitutes. In order to be eligible, the teacher must be in a permanent full- or part-time position. Personal leave is earned at the rate of .20 days for each full month of employment not to exceed two days per year. Part-time personnel earn a pro rata share of the rate for full-time teachers. Unused personal leave may be carried forward from one year to another and may be accumulated without limitation until June 30th. On June 30th, personal leave in excess of 5 days is converted to sick leave so that a maximum of 5 days of personal leave are carried forward to July 1st. Upon retirement, any personal leave may also be converted to sick leave.

How and when can personal leave be used?

- (a) Personal leave may be used only upon the authorization of the immediate supervisor.
- (b) An eligible teacher or media coordinator shall not take personal leave on the first day that he/she is required to report for the school year; on a required teacher workday; on days scheduled for State testing; or on the day before or the day after a holiday or scheduled vacation day, unless the request is approved by the principal.
- (c) An eligible teacher or media coordinator who requests personal leave at least five days in advance shall be automatically granted the request subject to the availability of a substitute teacher. An eligible teacher or media coordinator making the request **cannot be required to provide a reason for the request if the request is made at least five days in advance.**
- (d) Personal leave may be used on any instructional day or workday except as noted in paragraph (b) above.
- (e) Eligible teachers or media coordinators using personal leave receive full salary less the required substitute deduction, except when using personal leave on teacher workdays. Eligible teachers or media coordinators using personal leave on teacher workdays shall receive full salary. Eligible teachers or media coordinators may use up to their accrued amount of personal leave on teacher workdays in accordance with paragraphs a, b, c, and d above.

What are some of the special points I need to know about personal leave?

- (a) Personal leave should be used with due and proper consideration given to the welfare of the students and teachers alike and shall not be advanced.
- (b) When an eligible teacher or media coordinator resigns or separates from service, personal leave cannot be paid out in lump sum.
- (c) Personal leave must be used in one-half or whole day units.
- (d) Eligible teachers and media coordinators using personal leave receive full salary less the required substitute deduction except on teacher workdays.
- (e) Personal leave must be transferred between NC public schools.

5.10 Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) allows eligible employees to take 12 workweeks of unpaid, job-protected leave for their own serious medical condition or that of an immediate family member (parent, spouse or child). In addition, FMLA allows eligible employees to take the same job-protected leave for the birth of a child or the placement of a child with the employee through adoption or foster care. Employers must maintain any employer-paid health benefits while the employee is on FMLA leave.

Which employees are covered under and eligible for FMLA?

An employee's eligibility for FMLA shall be made based on the employee's months of service and hours of work as of the date leave is to commence. Because each employee's situation is different, it is best to contact an HR Specialist about your situation.

An employee is eligible if:

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| <p><u>Full Time</u> (at least 30 hours per week or the number of hours established as full-time for the class of work)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent Status • Interim Status (if more than 6 months) or <p><u>Part Time</u> (at least 20 hours per week)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent Status • Interim Status (if more than 6 months) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has been employed for at least 12 months (need not be consecutive) • Has been employed for at least 1,250 hours of service during the 12-month period immediately preceding the commencement of the leave |
| <p><u>Full Time</u> (at least 30 hours per week or the number of hours established as full-time for the class of work)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary* (less than 6 months of employment) <p><u>Part Time</u> (less than 20 hours per week)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has been employed for at least 12 months (need not be consecutive) • Has been employed for at least 1,250 hours of service during the 12-month period immediately preceding the commencement of the leave |

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| Note: *This leave is without pay. | |
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5.11 Worker's Compensation

North Carolina Public School Law, G.S. §115C-337, states that provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act shall be applicable to all school employees and the State Board of Education shall make such arrangements as necessary to carry out the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act applicable to such employees paid from state school funds. Liability of the state for compensation shall be confined to school employees paid by the state from state public school funds for injuries or death caused by accident arising out of and in the course of their employment in connection with the state-operated school term.

Due to its intricacies, you should direct your worker's compensation questions to an HR Specialist.

5.12 Military Leave for Extended Active Duty

All permanent, probationary, and trainee employees who enter active military service are eligible for military leave for extended active duty. Military Leave is guided by USERRA. Because of its complexities, questions should be directed to an HR Specialist.

5.13 Vision Insurance

Vision insurance, an optional benefit, is provided by Superior Vision. Contact an HR Specialist with your questions.

5.14 Dental Insurance

Another optional employee benefit is dental insurance that is provided by Guardian. Contact an HR Specialist, should you have questions about this benefit.

5.15 Flexible Benefits Plan

Eligible employees have access to the Flexible Benefits Plan that permits voluntary participation in cancer policies; flexible spending accounts for medical purposes and dependent care; disability benefits; life insurance; accident benefits; and medical bridge indemnity. Visit <http://piercегroupbenefits.com/client/waynecountyschools> for more specifics or contact an HR Specialist. As a district, WCPS offers a death benefit of one time the annual salary after one year of state employment, ranging from \$25,000 to \$50,000.

5.16 Supplemental Retirement Plans

Optional supplemental retirement plans are available through Prudential in the form of a 401(k) or 457 tax deferred plan. Contributions are pre-tax and deducted from payroll checks. Information is available at <http://www.ncplans.prudential.com>.