



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Thomaston-Upson County Schools
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WELCOME

Thank you for choosing to be a part of Thomaston-Upson County Schools this year. Our Mission is “Excellence in Education...Every Individual, Every Day,” and together we have a unique opportunity to share this Mission for Thomaston-Upson County Schools.

As we strive for success in making a difference in our community, we know that we can achieve our goals by developing and maintaining relationships based on mutual trust, cooperation, respect, dignity and consideration of others.

We wish for all employees a successful, challenging, enjoyable and rewarding experience with Thomaston-Upson County Schools!

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This handbook has been prepared to assist you with understanding the policies, regulations and procedures pertaining to your employment with Thomaston-Upson County Schools. It is prepared for informational purposes only and its contents should in no way be interpreted as a contract between the Thomaston-Upson County Board of Education and any of its employees.

It is the responsibility of each employee to review and follow the policies and regulations of the Board of Education which affect his/her employment. As with any handbook, it is a summary of policies and any questions for clarification or understanding should be directed to your supervisor. All adopted policies of the Thomaston-Upson County School Board are available online and may be accessed through district's home page at www.upson.k12.ga.us. From the *Our District* tab, select *Board of Education*, then *eBOARD Website*. Personnel policies are Item G under the *Policies* tab.

The Thomaston-Upson County School District reserves the right to change any of its policies, including those printed in this handbook. Board policies are reviewed and changed from time to time as the need arises. New policies become effective on the date determined by the Board. It is recommended that employees review the policies from time to time to assure compliance. Policies which are printed or referenced in this handbook may have been superseded by more recent policies.

Cafeteria Plan/IRS Section 125

A Cafeteria Plan is a special program meeting the guidelines of Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code that offers a tax savings to employees. If participation is selected, the plan provides that deductions for the selected fringe benefits will be made from the monthly/annual salary before federal taxes, state taxes and social security are computed. The result is a significant savings each month, and more take-home compensation.

Each employee must provide written authorization for entry into this program,.

Our Cafeteria Program, currently managed by Gary Johnson Insurance, offers a varied “menu” from which to pick and choose optional benefit plans, a variety of limits and coverage within these product lines:

1. Individual and Dependent Dental Insurance
2. Supplemental and Dependent Life Insurance
3. Individual and Dependent Vision Insurance
4. Cancer Supplement
5. Hospital Intensive Care Supplement
6. Disability Income Insurance

Certification

The teaching certificate is a most important document as relates to the employment of a teacher, administrator and/or paraprofessional educator. State and federal law mandates that valid certificates be held for all certified positions. It is each employee’s responsibility to know the status of his/her certification and to keep certification current. Visit the Georgia Professional Standards Commission web site at www.gapsc.com for a complete list of certification rules.

Employees requesting upgrades and field additions through the school district are exempt from the PSC application fee. Changes resulting in a level upgrade should be requested through the Personnel Department in order to assure a more expedient process as well as proper processing of any contract change warranted by a certification upgrade.

The Thomaston-Upson County Board of Education does not accept responsibility for an individual’s certificate, though as a courtesy, the Personnel Office distributes renewal information, forms and reminders, and will assist in every possible manner with renewals and other certification transactions.

Chain of Command

The school system's chain of command is designed to promote the overall effectiveness of school programs. If there is a question or problem to be resolved, staff at the local school level will follow the chain of command established by the principal. The principal is directly responsible to the Deputy Superintendent and Superintendent.

Clocking In And Out at the School/Work Place

All personnel in the Thomaston-Upson County School district must keep a time in/time out record by the method designated by the Principal or immediate supervisor.

Compensation

Teachers and other certified personnel are paid from the Board-approved Certified Salary Schedule. Placement on the salary schedule is based upon rules of the Georgia Department of Education and Georgia Professional Standards. It is the responsibility of the employee to provide documentation required for placement on the schedule. In addition to the certified base salary, the Thomaston-Upson County Board of Education provides an annual local supplement, contingent upon availability of funding.

The employee contract is contingent upon the employee securing and continuing to hold a valid teaching certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. A lack/loss of a valid certificate shall result in termination of the employee's contract.

All support personnel are paid from Board-approved salary scales. Pay is based upon the number of days worked per year, and number of hours worked per day. Verified experience and education determine initial placement on the salary scale.

Conduct

Employees should conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. Unseemly conduct and unbecoming language in the presence of students and fellow workers will not be tolerated.

Certificated Personnel (teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, etc.):

505-6-.01 THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS Effective June 15, 2015

(1) Introduction. The Code of Ethics for Educators defines the professional behavior of educators in Georgia and serves as a guide to ethical conduct. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission has adopted standards that represent the conduct generally accepted by the education profession. The code defines unethical conduct justifying disciplinary sanction and provides guidance for protecting the health, safety and general welfare of students and educators, and assuring the citizens of Georgia a degree of accountability within the education profession.

(2) Definitions

(a) "Certificate" refers to any teaching, service, or leadership certificate, license, or permit issued by authority of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.

(b) "Child endangerment" occurs when an educator disregards a substantial and/or unjustifiable risk of bodily harm to the student.

(c) "Educator" is a teacher, school or school system administrator, or other education personnel who hold a certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission and persons who have applied for but have not yet received a certificate. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, "educator" also refers to paraprofessionals, aides, and substitute teachers.

(d) "Student" is any individual enrolled in the state's public or private schools from preschool through grade 12 or any individual between and including the ages of 3 and 17 under the age of 18. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct for Educators, the enrollment period for a graduating student ends on August 31 of the year of graduation.

(e) "Complaint" is any written and signed statement from a local board, the state board, or one or more individual residents of this state filed with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission alleging that an educator has breached one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators. A "complaint" will be deemed a request to investigate.

(f) "Revocation" is the invalidation of any certificate held by the educator.

(g) "Denial" is the refusal to grant initial certification to an applicant for a certificate.

(h) "Suspension" is the temporary invalidation of any certificate for a period of time specified by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.

(i) "Reprimand" admonishes the certificate holder for his or her conduct. The reprimand cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.

(j) "Warning" warns the certificate holder that his or her conduct is unethical. The warning cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.

(k) "Monitoring" is the quarterly appraisal of the educator's conduct by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission through contact with the educator and his or her employer. As a condition of monitoring, an educator may be required to submit a criminal background check (GCIC). The Commission specifies the length of the monitoring period.

(l) "No Probable Cause" is a determination by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission that, after a preliminary investigation, either no further action need be taken or no cause exists to recommend disciplinary action.

(3) Standards

(a) Standard 1: Legal Compliance - An educator shall abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to the Commission or conviction of a felony or of any crime involving moral turpitude; of any other criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, trafficking, sale, or possession of a controlled substance or marijuana as provided for in Chapter 13 of Title 16; or of any other sexual offense as provided for in Code Section 16-6-1 through 16-6-17, 16-6-20, 16-6-22.2, or 16-12-100; or any other laws applicable to the profession. As used herein, conviction includes a finding or verdict of guilty, or a plea of nolo contendere, regardless of whether an appeal of the conviction has been sought; a situation where first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt pursuant to the charge was granted; and a situation where an adjudication of guilt or sentence was otherwise withheld or not entered on the charge or the charge was otherwise disposed of in a similar manner in any jurisdiction.

(b) Standard 2: Conduct with Students - An educator shall always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. committing any act of child abuse, including physical and verbal abuse;
2. committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment;
3. committing any sexual act with a student or soliciting such from a student;
4. engaging in or permitting harassment of or misconduct toward a student that would violate a state or federal law;
5. soliciting, encouraging, or consummating an inappropriate written, verbal, electronic, or physical relationship with a student;
6. furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student; or
7. failing to prevent the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs by students who are under the educator's supervision (including but not limited to at the educator's residence or any other private setting).

(c) Standard 3: Alcohol or Drugs - An educator shall refrain from the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs during the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. being on school or Local Unit of Administration (LUA)/school district premises or at a

school or a LUA/school district-related activity while under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs; and

2. being on school or LUA/school district premises or at a school-related activity involving students while under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcohol. A school-related activity includes, but is not limited to, any activity sponsored by the school or school system (booster clubs, parent-teacher organizations, or any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum i.e. Foreign Language trips, etc).

(d) Standard 4: Honesty - An educator shall exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to, falsifying, misrepresenting or omitting:

1. professional qualifications, criminal history, college or staff development credit and/or degrees, academic award, and employment history;
2. information submitted to federal, state, local school districts and other governmental agencies;
3. information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel;
4. reasons for absences or leaves;
5. information submitted in the course of an official inquiry/investigation; and
6. information submitted in the course of professional practice.

(e) Standard 5: Public Funds and Property - An educator entrusted with public funds and property shall honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. misusing public or school-related funds;
2. failing to account for funds collected from students or parents;
3. submitting fraudulent requests or documentation for reimbursement of expenses or for pay (including fraudulent or purchased degrees, documents, or coursework);
4. co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts; and
5. using school or school district property without the approval of the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee.

(f) Standard 6: Remunerative Conduct - An educator shall maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. soliciting students or parents of students, or school and/or LUA/school district personnel, to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee;
2. accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest;
3. tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee; and
4. coaching, instructing, promoting athletic camps, summer leagues, etc. that involves students in an educator's school system and from whom the educator receives remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee. These types of activities must be in compliance with all rules and regulations of the Georgia High School Association.

(g) Standard 7: Confidential Information - An educator shall comply with state and federal laws and state school board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material and other information. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. sharing of confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information, family status and/or income, and assessment/testing results unless disclosure is required or permitted by law;
2. sharing of confidential information restricted by state or federal law;
3. violation of confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, violating local school system or state directions for the use of tests or test items, etc.; and
4. violation of other confidentiality agreements required by state or local policy.

(h) Standard 8: Abandonment of Contract - An educator shall fulfill all of the terms and obligations detailed in the contract with the local board of education or education agency for the duration of the contract. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. *abandoning the contract for professional services without prior release from the contract by the employer, and*
 2. *willfully refusing to perform the services required by a contract.*
- (i) *Standard 9: Required Reports - An educator shall file reports of a breach of one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators, child abuse (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5), or any other required report. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:*
1. *failure to report all requested information on documents required by the Commission when applying for or renewing any certificate with the Commission;*
 2. *failure to make a required report of a violation of one or more standards of the Code of Ethics for educators of which they have personal knowledge as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner; and*
 3. *failure to make a required report of any violation of state or federal law soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. These reports include but are not limited to: murder, voluntary manslaughter, aggravated assault, aggravated battery, kidnapping, any sexual offense, any sexual exploitation of a minor, any offense involving a controlled substance and any abuse of a child if an educator has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused.*
- (j) *Standard 10: Professional Conduct - An educator shall demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and preserves the dignity and integrity of the education profession. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to any conduct that impairs and/or diminishes the certificate holder's ability to function professionally in his or her employment position, or behavior or conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students.*
- (k) *Standard 11: Testing - An educator shall administer state-mandated assessments fairly and ethically. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:*
1. *committing any act that breaches Test Security; and*
 2. *compromising the integrity of the assessment.*

(4) Reporting

- (a) *Educators are required to report a breach of one or more of the Standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. Educators should be aware of legal requirements and local policies and procedures for reporting unethical conduct. Complaints filed with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission must be in writing and must be signed by the complainant (parent, educator, or other LUA/school district employee, etc.).*
- (b) *The Commission notifies local and state officials of all disciplinary actions. In addition, suspensions and revocations are reported to national officials, including the NASDTEC Clearinghouse.*

(5) Disciplinary Action

- (a) *The Georgia Professional Standards Commission is authorized to suspend, revoke, or deny certificates, to issue a reprimand or warning, or to monitor the educator's conduct and performance after an investigation is held and notice and opportunity for a hearing are provided to the certificate holder. Any of the following grounds shall be considered cause for disciplinary action against the holder of a certificate:*
1. *unethical conduct as outlined in The Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-11 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);*
 2. *disciplinary action against a certificate in another state on grounds consistent with those specified in the Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-11 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);*
 3. *order from a court of competent jurisdiction or a request from the Department of Human Resources that the certificate should be suspended or the application for certification should be denied for non-payment of child support (O.C.G.A. §19-6-28.1 and §19-11-9.3);*
 4. *notification from the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation that the educator is in default and not in satisfactory repayment status on a student loan guaranteed by the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation (O.C.G.A. §20-3-295);*
 5. *suspension or revocation of any professional license or certificate;*
 6. *violation of any other laws and rules applicable to the profession; and*
 7. *any other good and sufficient cause that renders an educator unfit for employment as an*

educator.

(b) An individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended may not serve as a volunteer or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher or in any other position during the period of his or her revocation, suspension or denial for a violation of The Code of Ethics. The superintendent and the educator designated by the superintendent/Local Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that an individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district. Both the superintendent and the superintendent's designee must hold GaPSC certification. Should the superintendent's certificate be revoked, suspended, or denied, the Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that the superintendent whose certificate has been revoked, suspended, or denied is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200; 20-2-981 through 20-2-984.5

Classified (Support) Personnel STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Employees who work together on the job should follow established guidelines concerning their conduct and relationships. It is your responsibility as an employee to follow common courtesy when dealing with other workers and supervisors. The Thomaston-Upson County School District shall take a constructive approach to disciplinary matters to insure that all employees are permitted to work in a positive atmosphere.

The Thomaston-Upson County Board of Education reserves the right to search employee personal effects, such as purses, toolboxes, desks, lockers, and closets on the Thomaston-Upson County Board of Education's property.

Violations of standards of conduct and job performance will result in one of the following forms of corrective action:

1. Oral warning
2. Written warning
3. Suspension without pay
4. Discharge and termination from employment

The corrective action shall be based on the seriousness of the infraction, the past record of the employee and the circumstances surrounding the matter.

Although there is no way to list every possible violation of standards of conduct, the following is a partial list of examples of infractions, which shall result in corrective action.

1. Falsifying employment application, time card/sheet, or personnel documents or other Board of Education documents or records.
2. Unauthorized possession of Thomaston-Upson County Board of Education or employee property.
3. Gambling, carrying weapons or explosives, violating criminal laws on Board of education property or violating Board of Education policies or regulations.
4. Fighting, throwing things, horseplay, practical jokes, or other disorderly conduct which may endanger the well-being or safety of any employee or student.

5. Engaging in acts of dishonesty, fraud, theft or sabotage.
6. Improper use of system/school tax exemption ID number.
7. Improper use, unauthorized use or theft of school/system funds.
8. Threatening, intimidating, coercing, using abusive or vulgar blasphemous language, sexual harassment, or interfering with the performance of other employees.
9. Insubordination or refusals to comply with instructions or failure to perform reasonable duties which are assigned by a supervisor.
10. Unauthorized use of Thomaston-Upson County Board of Education material, vehicles, time, equipment, buildings or property.
11. Damaging or destroying Thomaston-Upson County Board of Education property due to careless or willful act.
12. Any unethical conduct, including but not limited to:
 - a. committing any act of child abuse, including physical and verbal abuse;
 - b. committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment;
 - c. committing any sexual act with a student or soliciting such from a student;
 - d. engaging in or permitting harassment of or misconduct toward a student that would violate a state or federal law;
 - e. soliciting, encouraging, or consummating an inappropriate written, verbal, electronic, or physical relationship with a student;
 - f. furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student; or
 - g. failing to prevent the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs by students who are under the educator's supervision (including but not limited to at the employee's residence or any other private setting).
13. Any conduct which the Thomaston-Upson County Board of Education determines to reflect adversely on the school district or employee.

Confidentiality

Much of what personnel may see or hear in schools is confidential by law. Any information concerning student achievement and behavior is confidential. The confidentiality rights of students are protected through state and federal regulations, and employees become liable for protecting students' rights. Confidential information regarding students or staff is not to be discussed in the community. A breach of this confidentiality can result in termination of employment.

Policy: Criminal Background Check

The Board of Education is cognizant of the importance of protecting the employees and students of the school system from employing persons who are known to have dangerous propensities.

All personnel, certificated as well as non-certificated, shall be fingerprinted and have a criminal record check before being employed by the Board of Education.

All certificated personnel shall have a criminal record check made as required above upon any certificate renewal application to the Professional Standards Commission.

All non-certificated personnel shall have subsequent criminal record checks every 5th year of employment.

The Board shall have no liability for defamation, invasion of privacy, or other claim based upon good faith action as provided for by state law. Any disciplinary action taken against an employee as a

result of information obtained through a records check shall be governed by the provisions of O.C.G.A. 20-2-940 (Fair Dismissal Act).

Board Policy GAK

Adopted: 08/24/1976
Last Revised 11/11/2014

Deferred Compensation Plan

Currently the Thomaston-Upson County Board of Education offers a deferred compensation (before tax savings) plan through approved vendors listed under our official plan document as mandated by Internal Revenue Code. Representatives for approved vendors meet with employees periodically throughout the year. The third party administrator for TUCS Plan is TSA Consulting Group, Inc. which administers the Plan to assure IRS compliance. Any request for change, withdrawal, hardship, benefits commencement, etc. should be routed to TSA. Further information is available at www.tsacg.com, or at 1-888-796-3786, Option 4.

Direct Deposit

Direct deposit is mandatory for all Thomaston-Upson County Schools employees. The first paycheck after direct deposit enrollment is a live check to allow for pre-note processing to confirm account information.

Policy: Dress Code

The Thomaston-Upson County Board of Education believes that teachers and other certificated faculty members who dress in a professional manner command greater respect and are held in higher esteem by parents, students, and members of the general public. Research also maintains that teachers who dress professionally are able to maintain a better learning environment.

With this research in mind, the Board hereby establishes a policy requiring all teachers, school administrators, and other members of the instructional staff, including paraprofessional and office staff, to dress in a professional manner and style consistent with the dress of those professions.

Guidelines

- 1. Dress which is too short, improper fitting, or overly casual is inappropriate for school wear.*
- 2. Shorts (other than city shorts), jeans (other than dress jeans) and sweat suits are not appropriate for daily wear. Coaches' shorts should be appropriate and should be worn only in physical education areas.*
- 3. School administrators may establish days for special dress if appropriate for school related activities.*

Adopted: 09/09/1996
Last Revised: 01/14/2014

All employees are expected to maintain an appropriate appearance that is neat, clean, and represents a businesslike approach to our jobs. Bus drivers and bus monitors will follow the dress code provided by the Director of Transportation. Custodians, school food assistants, and maintenance workers shall wear any uniforms provided for employees by the Board of Education.

Policy: Drug-Free Workplace/Staff Rights and Responsibilities

The Thomaston-Upson County Board of Education is concerned with the well-being of all employees of the school system. The Board recognizes that a drug-free workplace encourages employee productivity and promotes the accomplishment of the system's missions and goals. In accordance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1990, the Board of Education hereby declares that the unlawful

manufacture, distribution, sale and possession of controlled substances, other dangerous drugs or alcohol are prohibited in the workplace for all school system employees.

Effective immediately, any location at which Board of Education business is conducted is declared to be a drug-free workplace.

- 1. Any public employee who is convicted for the first time, under the laws of this state, the United States, or any other state, of any criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, sale, or possession of a controlled substance, marijuana, or a dangerous drug shall report such offense within 5 days to the Superintendent or a designee and shall be suspended from public employment for a period of not less than two months. Any such employee shall be required as a condition of completion of suspension to complete a drug abuse treatment and education program licensed under Chapter 5 of Title 26 and approved by the Board of Education. Any such person shall be ineligible for any public employment for a period of three months from the date of conviction.*
- 2. Any public employee who is convicted for a second or subsequent time, under the laws of this state, the United States, or any other state, of any criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, sale, or possession of a controlled substance, marijuana, or a dangerous drug shall be terminated from public employment and shall be ineligible for other public employment for a period of five years from the most recent date of conviction.*

The suspension, expulsion, and ineligibility sanctions prescribed in this chapter, O.C.G.A. 45-23-1 et seq., are intended as minimum sanctions and nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prohibit the Board from establishing and implementing additional or more stringent sanctions for criminal offenses and other conduct involving the unlawful manufacture, distribution, sale, or possession of a controlled substance, marijuana, or a dangerous drug.

On or after July 1, 1990, if, prior to an arrest for an offense involving a controlled substance, marijuana, or a dangerous drug, an employee notifies the Board of Education or designee that the employee illegally uses a controlled substance, marijuana, or a dangerous drug and is receiving or agrees to receive treatment under a drug abuse treatment and education program licensed under Chapter 5 of Title 26 and approved by the Board of Education, the employee shall be entitled to maintain the employee's employment for up to one year as long as the employee follows the treatment plan. During this period, the employee shall not be separated from employment solely on the basis of the employee's drug dependence but the employee's work activities may be restructured if practicable to protect persons or property. No statement made by an employee to a supervisor of the employee or other person in order to comply with this Code section shall be admissible in any civil, administrative, or criminal proceeding as evidence against the public employee. The rights granted by this Code section shall be available to an employee only once during a five-year period and shall apply to any employee who has refused to be tested or who has tested positive for a controlled substance, marijuana, or a dangerous drug.

An employee who has signed a fourth year contract with the school system, as defined under O.C.G.A. 20-2-940, shall be offered a hearing as provided for under the Fair Dismissal Act 20-2-940 et seq.

The Superintendent of Schools shall develop a drug-free awareness program to inform employees of the following:

- The dangers of drug abuse or alcohol in the workplace.*
- State Board of Education policy GAM (Staff Rights and Responsibilities: Drug-Free Workplace) and any accompanying administrative procedures concerning the maintenance of a drug-free workplace.*
- Any available drug counseling, rehabilitation; and employee assistance programs.*
- Any penalties to be imposed upon employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace.*

Entities contracting with the Board of Education shall, as a condition of the contract, assure a drug-free workplace as required under the U.S. Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988. For contracts, a drug-free workplace means a geographic location at which individuals are directly engaged in the performance of work pursuant to a contract with the Board of Education.

Board Policy GAM

Adopted: 9/11/1990
Last Revised: 1/8/2013

Policy: Drug-Free Workplace (Drivers)

It is the policy of the Thomaston-Upson Board of Education that all employees who, as a condition of employment and job assignment, must have a Commercial Driver's License, hereafter referred to as drivers, shall be tested for misuse of alcohol or use of controlled substances. Such tests shall include pre-employment and/or pre-duty testing, reasonable suspicion testing, random testing, post-accident alcohol and controlled substance testing, and follow-up testing. In addition to tests for alcohol abuse, tests shall be conducted to detect the use of marijuana, cocaine, opiates, phencyclidine (PCP), and amphetamines (including methamphetamine).

All drivers and driver applicants shall be notified that they are so covered, and that tests for alcohol abuse and use of controlled substances will be administered from time to time as provided by this policy. Drivers cannot refuse to submit to such tests while employed by the Board of Education.

No driver shall report for duty or remain on duty while having an alcohol concentration greater than 0.00. Any driver having an alcohol concentration greater than 0.00 must be referred to a qualified substance abuse professional. No driver shall report for duty or remain on duty when using any controlled substance, except when the use is pursuant to the instructions of a physician who has advised the driver in writing that the substance does not adversely affect the driver's ability to perform safety sensitive functions and safely operate a commercial motor vehicle. Drivers shall be required to inform their supervisors of any therapeutic drug use.

Pre-Employment/Pre-Duty Testing

Prior to the first time a driver performs safety-sensitive functions, the driver shall undergo testing for alcohol and controlled substances.

Post-Accident Testing

In the event of an accident involving directly or indirectly a school district bus or other commercial vehicle, the driver(s) of the vehicle shall be tested for alcohol and controlled substance use within two hours after the accident. If it is not possible to administer the test within two hours, the Superintendent shall prepare and maintain on file for inspection a record stating the reasons the test was not promptly administered. Drivers who are subject to post-accident testing shall remain readily available for such testing. Otherwise, the driver is considered to have refused to submit to testing and employment shall be terminated. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to require the delay of necessary medical attention for injured people following an accident, or to prevent a driver from leaving the scene of an accident for a period necessary to obtain assistance in responding to the accident.

Random Testing

Random testing for alcohol abuse and use of controlled substances shall be unannounced and conducted quarterly. They shall be conducted as follows:

- 1. For alcohol abuse, twenty-five percent (25%) of drivers shall be chosen for random testing each calendar year.*
- 2. For use of controlled substances, fifty percent (50%) of drivers shall be chosen for random testing each calendar year.*

The percentage of drivers tested may be adjusted with written approval of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Selection of drivers to be tested shall be made by a scientifically valid method that ensures that each covered employee has an equal chance of being tested each time selection is made i.e., a random number table of computer-based random number generator that is matched with employees' social security numbers, or other comparable identifying numbers.

Drivers who are notified that they have been selected for random testing shall proceed immediately to the test site. Drivers shall only be tested for alcohol while performing safety sensitive functions, just before performing safety-sensitive functions, or just after the driver has ceased to perform safety-sensitive functions.

Reasonable Suspicion Testing

Reasonable suspicion shall be cause for a driver to be required to undergo testing for alcohol abuse or use of controlled substances. Reasonable suspicion must be based upon specific contemporaneous, articulable observations by a qualified supervisor or school official concerning the appearance, behavior, speech or body odors of a driver, or indications of the chronic and withdrawal effects of controlled substances. Such observations must have been made by a qualified supervisor or school official during, just preceding, or just after the period of the workday that the driver is required to perform safety-sensitive functions. Within 24 hours of the observed behavior, a written record shall be made of the observations leading to a controlled substance reasonable suspicion testing and signed by the supervisor or school official who made the observations.

Persons designated by the Board to be qualified to determine whether reasonable suspicion exists to require a driver to undergo testing must have received at least sixty (60) minutes of training on alcohol misuse and at least an additional sixty (60) minutes of training on controlled substances use. The training must have covered the physical, behavioral, speech, and performance indicators of probable alcohol misuse and use of controlled substances.

Follow-up Testing

In the event it is determined that a driver is in need of assistance in resolving problems associated with alcohol misuse and/or use of controlled substance, the Superintendent shall ensure that the driver is:

- 1. advised of the resources available to the driver in evaluating and resolving problems associated with misuse and/or use of controlled substances;*
- 2. evaluated by a substance abuse professional who shall determine what assistance, if any the driver needs in resolving problems associated with alcohol misuse and controlled substance use;*
- 3. Drivers who are guilty of controlled substance abuse shall be terminated.*

Before a driver returns to duty, the driver shall:

- 1. undergo a return-to-duty alcohol test with a result of an alcohol concentration of 0.00;*
- 2. be evaluated to determine that the driver has properly followed any rehabilitation program that was prescribed.*
- 3. be subjected to unannounced follow-up testing administered by the school district, at least six (6) times during the first twelve (12) months following return to duty.*

Confidential Handling of Driver Test Information

Driver alcohol abuse and controlled substance use testing information is confidential and may be released only to the appropriate substance abuse professional. Any other release of this information is only with the driver's written consent. Non-compliance with this policy or violation of the federal or state regulations may result in severe disciplinary action including suspension or dismissal.

Board Policy GAMA

Date Adopted: 12/5/1994

Last Revised: 1/14/2014

Equal Opportunity Employment

The Thomaston-Upson County Board of Education is an equal opportunity employer. As such, employment procedures and practices are to be nondiscriminatory in regards to sex, age, race, color, handicap, disability, religion, national origin, veteran status, or genetic information.

The following individuals have been designated as responsible for coordination of information and compliance with nondiscrimination law:

ADA & Section 504: Mrs. Amy Miller, Director of Special Education
Titles VI, VII & IX: Dr. Larry Derico, Assistant Superintendent

See Board Policy GAAA
Last Revised 10/04/2016

Evaluations: Certified Personnel

The Superintendent shall ensure that annual teacher evaluations are in accordance with state law and shall at minimum take into consideration the following:

1. The role of the teacher in meeting the school's student achievement goals, including the academic gains of students assigned to the teacher;
2. Observations of the teacher by the principal and assistant principals during the delivery of instruction and at other times as appropriate;
3. Participation in professional development opportunities and the application of concepts learned to classroom and school activities;
4. Communication and interpersonal skills as they relate to interaction with students, parents, other teacher, administrators, and other school personnel;
5. Timelines and attendance for assigned responsibilities;
6. Adherence to school and local school system procedures and rules; and
7. Personal conduct while in performance of school duties.

Evaluations: Support Personnel

All support personnel employed by the school district shall be evaluated annually and periodically by their immediate supervisor. The job performance evaluation allows the supervisor to discuss overall job performance and summarize both formal and informal job performance discussions held throughout the year. It will review strengths and also point out ways to improve job performance. Employees are encouraged to discuss the evaluation with the supervisor. The purpose of the evaluation is to assist in reaching goals and communicating expectations, as well as improvement in job performance.

Insurance: Health

The following insurance programs are available through payroll deduction for permanent, full-time employees: life, health, disability, cancer, dental, and vision.

Full-time employees are eligible for enrollment in the State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) governed by the Georgia Department of Community Health. The member's

share of the premium is payroll deducted each month. The remainder of the cost of coverage, called the “employer share,” is paid monthly at the rate of \$945.00 for all certified personnel. The employer share for support personnel is currently \$846.20 per month, and will increase to \$945.00 per month in January, 2018. The combination of the employee’s monthly premium plus the employer share indicates the full advantage of access to group health insurance.

New employees choosing to enroll in the health plan gain coverage effective on the first day of the month following one full calendar month of employment. Any qualifying event affecting coverage requires reporting within thirty days. Qualifying events are explained on the website of the State Health Benefit Plan. Visit www.dch.georgia.gov/SHBP for details.

Insurance: Life

A \$10,000 life insurance policy is provided to every permanent, full-time employee free of charge, subject to appropriate, continued funding. An additional, optional amount may be purchased according to established guides and rates. This coverage is obtained upon employment and may be modified during the announced open enrollment period. The employee life insurance plans are managed by Gary Johnson Insurance, 308 West Main Street in Thomaston. Telephone: 706.647.5485.

Leave

Absence Protocol

In the event of absence, employees should follow the absence protocol set by the administrator at his/her work location. Absences must be reported on a daily basis.

Extended Leave Procedures

Employees who are absent from work for ten (10) days or more must complete request for extended leave forms which may include but are not limited to Family Medical Leave forms and Physician Certification forms.

Federal Family and Medical Leave Act

Employees of the Thomaston-Upson Board of Education who are classified as full-time employees in their position/job title, employed by the Board for at least 12 months, and who have worked at least 1250 hours during the 12 month period immediately preceding the commencement of the leave, are eligible for up to sixty (60) days of unpaid leave per year under the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides job and benefit protection for up to 60 scheduled work days in a 12-month period for eligible employees with qualifying reasons. The 12-month period is measured from the date FMLA leave is first used. Family and Medical Leave runs concurrently with Sick Leave, Vacation, Personal Leave, and Sick Leave Bank, except as otherwise required by law. This leave may be used for absences such as:

1. When an employee is unable to work because of a serious health condition.
2. To care for the employee’s qualifying family member with a serious health condition.
3. The birth of a child to the employee.

Other qualifying absences as well as the policy in its entirety may be found in the Board of Education section of the Thomaston-Upson Schools' website, www.upson.k12.ga.us.

See Board Policy GBRIG
Last Revised: 3/9/2010

Policy: Leaves And Absences

The Thomaston-Upson Board of Education believes that the school system personnel are entitled to an employment benefit which reduces the risk of monetary losses because of certain recognized absences.

This policy shall apply to all full-time, benefits-eligible employees of the Thomaston-Upson County Board of Education. "Full-time, benefits-eligible" is defined as working at least 50 percent for certified staff members, and at least 60 percent for classified staff members. All employees are required to follow the appropriate work calendar established by the Board of Education for their positions, and may take leave only in accordance with this policy or other leave policies enacted by the Board of Education.

ACCRUAL OF SICK LEAVE AND ABSENCE FOR MEDICAL AND RELATED REASONS

In accordance with Georgia law, employees will be entitled to annual sick leave with pay to be accrued at the rate of one and one quarter days for each completed contract month. All employees' unused sick leave shall be accumulated from one fiscal year to the next. Sick leave will be calculated on a pro-rated basis for those benefits-eligible employees whose daily work schedule is less than an eight-hour day.

USE OF SICK LEAVE

The leave provided for under this policy is available only for personal illness, injury or exposure to contagious diseases, or for absences necessitated by illness in the employee's immediate family. For the purpose of absences for medical and related reasons, members of the immediate family are defined as spouse, children, father, mother, brother, sister, grandparents, in-law equivalents of the above, or other relatives living in the household.

For any absence in which sick leave is used, the Superintendent shall have the right to require a physician's certificate stating that the employee is ill and is unable to perform his or her duties. In the event that sick leave is used to care for a member of the immediate family, the Superintendent shall have the right to require a physician's certificate stating that the employee is needed to care for the sick family member. If the Superintendent disagrees with a physician's statement of disability or ability, the Superintendent may appoint a physician of the same medical specialization as the employee's physician for the purpose of receiving independent medical judgment. School personnel shall not be charged sick leave for the first seven work days of absence due to an injury caused by a physical assault while the individual was engaged in the performance of his/her duties.

TRANSFER OF ACCUMULATED SICK LEAVE

Personnel covered by this policy may bring up to forty-five (45) unused sick and personal leave days accumulated from another approved Georgia school district. Any accumulated unused sick leave credited to personnel shall be forfeited if such personnel withdraw from service for a period of twelve (12) or more consecutive months, unless the withdrawal from service is for educational leave to seek a higher level or different field of certification, and provided that the withdrawal from service for this purpose is for no longer than 24 consecutive months. Any personnel who forfeit such accumulated sick and personal leave as required under this subsection shall be entitled to regain such accumulated leave after such personnel have returned to service for a period of two consecutive years.

PERSONAL LEAVE

Three days of any accumulated sick leave may be utilized during each school year for personal reasons provided prior approval of the absence is given by the Superintendent or his or her authorized representative, and provided the presence of the employee requesting absence is not essential for

effective school operation. Employees are not required to disclose the purpose for which such absence is sought. Absences caused by unplanned or extenuating circumstances such as car trouble or severely inclement weather shall be counted as personal leave.

JURY AND WITNESS LEAVE

There shall be no loss of an employee's job-related pay or employment benefits because of absence on the part of the employee for the purpose of attending a judicial proceeding in response to jury duty. Other lawfully issued court orders, processes, or subpoenas must be in response to school-related matters. Any pay received for jury duty shall be retained by the employee. The employee shall provide a copy of the summons, court order, process, or subpoena to their supervisor.

MILITARY LEAVE

Full-time employees of the Thomaston-Upson County School System shall be entitled to take a military leave for "ordered military duty," with full employment and reinstatement rights as provided by law. An employee shall be paid regular salary for a period or periods of absence while engaged in the performance of ordered military duty, and while going to and returning from such duty, not to exceed a total of 18 days in any one federal fiscal year. In the event the Governor declares an emergency and orders an employee to active duty as a member of the Georgia National Guard, such employee shall be paid regular salary while performing such duty for a period not to exceed 30 days in any one federal fiscal year. A request for military leave must be submitted to the employee's supervisor and Human Resources, along with a copy of the official military orders.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Up to three (3) days of bereavement leave may be used for absence due to death in the employee's immediate family. "Immediate family" is defined above, but for purposes of this type of leave only, it includes "grandchild." The employee must use this leave within seven (7) days of the death. Bereavement leave will not be deducted from the employee's accumulated sick leave. If bereavement is in excess of provided bereavement leave, sick leave may be utilized.

SICK LEAVE BANK

Please see Policy GBRIB (1).

ANNUAL LEAVE

Most 230-day employees earn vacation at a rate of ten (10) days per year, accrued on a monthly basis. Vacation must be pre-approved through a supervisor. Employees may accrue a maximum of twenty (20) vacation days. Any days over twenty will be forfeited on July 1 of each year. When an employee separates employment with the Thomaston-Upson County School System, a maximum of 20 vacation days will be paid out.

Board Policy GARH

Adopted: 9/11/2007
Last Revised 10/04/2016

Leave and Absence Incentives

Thomaston-Upson full time employees are currently eligible for an attendance incentive grant established to compensate those employees who maintain perfect attendance throughout the school year. Documented and approved Professional Leave absences are not considered absences. Disqualifications for the award include (but are not limited to):

- a) any scheduled workday missed for a cause other than approved Professional Leave;
- b) any late arrival on a scheduled work day;
- c) any early dismissal on a scheduled work day.

The attendance incentive program is contingent upon availability of funding, and may

be discontinued or reduced for deficiency. The current incentive for qualified employees is \$200.

Leaving School Campus During Regular Work Hours

In the event an employee needs to leave campus during the regular workday, the employee must request and **receive approval** from the Principal or an Assistant Principal at the school. The employee must sign out and sign in upon return to the school. The Principal is responsible for creating a procedure for such situations.

In the event that an Administrator needs to leave the school campus, the Administrator must notify the Superintendent or her designee at the Central Office.

Policy: Sick Leave Bank

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Sick Leave Bank is to provide member employees with sick leave upon the exhaustion of all accrued sick leave. Members contribute a portion of their accumulated sick leave to the Bank, and may request withdrawal of sick leave from the Bank, in accordance with the guidelines established by this policy as approved by the Thomaston-Upsen Board of Education.

II. ESTABLISHMENT/CONTINUITY

In order for the bank to be established and remain operational, it must be approved by the Board of Education and maintain at least 100 participants.

III. BANK ADMINISTRATION

The Sick Leave Bank shall be administered by a committee appointed by the Superintendent or his/her designee; and composed of three certified representatives, three support representatives, and one individual designated as the Superintendent's representative (votes as necessary in the event of a tie vote). Committee members will serve three-year terms. Annually the committee will elect a chairperson, a vice chairperson, and other such officers as they deem necessary. The Superintendent's representative will serve as recording secretary. Meetings will be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rule of Order.

The responsibilities of the committee are:

- A. To enforce all policies and provisions of the bank.*
- B. To recommend any additions, deletions, or modifications to the Bank's policies or provisions to the Board of Education for approval.*
- C. To consider all requests to withdraw days from the bank.*
- D. To monitor the number of days in the Bank, as reported by the Payroll Department.*
- E. To approve additional levies of sick days to replenish the Bank when the balance reaches a level equal to 50% of its membership.*
- F. To authorize notification of additional levies to the membership.*

IV. BANK MEMBERSHIP

The period for joining the sick leave bank will be from September 1 to October 1 of each school year. All employees who accumulate sick leave are eligible to become members of the Sick Leave Bank provided he/she has worked with the system at least one year and has accumulated at least one day of sick leave at the time of the membership application. Additional days (up to one per year) shall be assessed as needed to maintain the Bank. Donations of sick leave to the Bank are not refundable or transferrable.

Membership is strictly voluntary. A member may resign from the Bank by giving written notification to the Bank Committee during an open enrollment period. The employee, upon resignation from the Bank, shall not be eligible to withdraw any days already contributed, and shall not be eligible to rejoin except upon approval of the Committee. If employment with the school system ceases, the member is placed on inactive membership. Membership status will be reinstated upon re-employment with the system. Employees on approved leave of absences are considered employed for the purposes of the

Sick Leave Bank. Retirees are removed from the Bank and are not eligible to rejoin.

V. WITHDRAWALS OF SICK LEAVE

Members of the Sick Leave Bank shall be eligible to apply for withdrawals of Sick Leave from the Bank provided that:

- A. The employee has been a member of the Sick Leave Bank for thirty (30) calendar days and the sick leave days in the request occur after this waiting period.*
- B. The member has been absent due to personal injury, surgery or other illness that is catastrophic in nature (i.e., stroke, cancer, organ transplant, heart attack, trauma accident where major bones are broken). Eligibility also applies to absence due to such catastrophic illness or injury of the member's spouse or child. Disability due to normal pregnancy, childbirth or related medical condition is excluded.*
- C. The member's accumulated leave has been exhausted and the member has been absent for five (5) continuous working days without pay.*
- D. The member is not receiving Workers' Compensation or other remuneration for the absences provided in part or in full by the Thomaston-Upson Board of Education.*

VI. REQUESTS FOR WITHDRAWALS

Requests for withdrawals of leave from the Sick Leave Bank shall be in the form of a letter addressed to the Sick Leave Bank Committee which includes:

- a. name and address*
- b. last four digits of social security number*
- c. number of days requested (must be in ten [10]-day increments)*

The letter must be accompanied by a detailed physician's statement verifying the member's illness, injury, surgery or other temporary disability. The physician's statement shall also attest to the member's incapacity to perform the assigned duties. In the case of illness of the member's spouse or child, a detailed physician's statement verifying the patient's illness, injury, surgery or other temporary disability. The physician's statement shall also attest to the necessity of the member's absence from work to care for the patient.

The maximum number of days any member may receive in any twelve-month period is fifty (50).

All leave granted but not used by the member must be returned to the Sick Leave Bank.

Sick leave granted and used by the member does not have to be repaid except as members are uniformly assessed.

If a member is physically or mentally unable to make a request to the Sick Leave Bank, a family member or agent may file the request on the member's behalf.

Decisions on requests made to the Committee may be appealed to the Board of Education within thirty (30) days of the decision. The letter of appeal must be addressed to the Thomaston-Upson Board of Education and delivered to the office of the Superintendent, 205 Civic Center Drive, Thomaston, Georgia.

Any participating employee withdrawing sick leave shall not be required to replace those days except as a regular contributing member to the Sick Leave Bank.

VII. PROCESSING WITHDRAWAL REQUESTS

Upon receipt of an application, the Sick Leave Bank Committee shall meet and render a decision within twenty (20) working days.

Decisions must reflect a majority vote of committee members voting, and a majority must be present to convene the Committee.

The Committee will use the following criteria in administering the Bank and rendering decisions:

- (a) medical evidence of illness, injury, surgery or disability;
- (b) applicability of request under Bank Policy.

VIII. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Rules and provisions of the Sick Leave are subject to approval by the Thomaston-Upson Board of Education. The Board reserves the right to discontinue the Bank at any time.

Pursuant to GA Code 20-2-850(c) an employee may donate up to ten sick leave days to his/her spouse if such spouse is also an employee of the local board for purposes of maternity leave, illness, illness of a family member, or death of a family member.

Board Policy GBRIB(1) & GCRGB(1)

Adopted 8/14/2007
Last Revised 03/15/2012

Policy: Internet Acceptable Use

It is the belief of the Thomaston-Upson School District that the use of telecommunications, including the Internet, in instructional programs is an education strategy which facilitates communication, innovation, resource sharing, and access to information. Use of the Internet must be in support of education and research and consistent with the educational mission, goals, and objective of the school system.

It shall be the policy of the Thomaston-Upson Board of Education that the school district shall have continuous operation, with respect to any computers belonging to the school having access to the Internet:

1. A qualifying "technology protection measure" as that term is defined in section 1703(b) (1) of the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000; and
2. Procedures or guidelines developed by the Superintendent, administrators, and/or other appropriate personnel which provide for monitoring the online activities of users and the use of the chosen technology protection measures to protect against access through such computers to visual depictions that are (i) obscene, (ii) child pornography, or (iii) harmful to minors, as those terms are defined in section 1703(b) (1) and (2) of the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000. Such procedures or guidelines shall be designed to:
 - a. Provide for monitoring the online activities of users to prevent, to the extent practicable, access by minors to inappropriate matter of the Internet and the World Wide Web;
 - b. Promote the safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications;
 - c. Prevent unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking" and other unauthorized activities by minors online;
 - d. Prevent the unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors; and
 - e. Restrict minors' access to materials "harmful to minors," as that term is defined in Section 1703(b) (2) of the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000.

Board Policy IFBG

Adopted 8/14/2001
Last Revised 11/11/2014

Payday

All employees of the Thomaston-Upson County Board of Education are paid once per month on the last business day of each calendar month. Exceptions may be made for the months of November and December due to holiday schedules. An annual payroll check schedule is produced and distributed to all personnel. Dates are

subject to change, with notice provided. A copy may be requested by contacting the Finance Department at the Central Office. Telephone: 706.647.9621

Personal Information: Name and Address Changes

Employees must complete an *Address/Name Change* form through the Employee Portal to report changes in address, phone and name changes. Name changes cannot be made without a copy of the new Social Security card displaying the new name. Changes will not be made through emails or phone calls.

Personnel Assignments and Transfer

The basic consideration in the assignment of personnel is the well-being of the students and staff. The appropriateness of the assignment will have a significant impact on the morale of the staff and the effectiveness of the total educational program. Assignments to the school will be made by the Deputy Superintendent and Superintendent, and assignments within the schools will be made by the principal.

Personnel Files

Permanent personnel files are kept in the Personnel Department Office at Thomaston-Upson County Board of Education and in a digital format through the Employee Portal. It is the responsibility of the employee to provide any requested information including, but not limited to, the following:

- Application
- Reference Forms
- Official College Transcripts (if applicable)
- Experience Verification Forms from other Schools (if applicable)
- Official Copy of Teaching Certificate (if applicable)
- Copy of TCT, Praxis and/or GACE Score Reports (if applicable)
- Employee's Withholding Certificate for Income Tax Deductions (W-4)
- Georgia Withholding Certificate for Income Tax Deductions (G-4)
- Copy of Social Security Card and Driver's License
- Payroll Deduction Forms (Health, Life, Disability, etc.)
- I-9 Form
- Standards of Conduct Form
- Current Criminal Record Background Check
- Fingerprint Record (**Note: Employees hired prior to 1995 will be required to have fingerprinting done at the time of re-certification).

If the need develops for any other information, the employee will be expected to furnish it immediately upon receipt of request, making sure that all forms are properly notarized. It is important that all information requested be filed with Personnel Department by the deadline given.

Personnel Resignation

Employees planning to retire or resign at the end of a school year are encouraged to submit resignations as soon as feasible in order to facilitate planning for the upcoming year. Teachers failing to execute and return a contract within the allotted ten (10) days, unless extended by the Superintendent, shall be deemed a refusal of the offer of employment and treated as a resignation by the Board.

Resignations should be in writing, signed and delivered to the immediate supervisor or administrator for delivery to the Personnel Office for presentation to the Board of Education as a personnel item on the agenda of the next meeting.

Policy: Possession of Weapons by Employees

The Thomaston-Upson Board of Education is committed to maintaining a safe and secure working and learning environment. Unless authorized by the Board of Education or an administrator in accordance with this policy, or specifically authorized by state law, employees shall be prohibited from bringing weapons on any property or in any building owned or leased by the District, at school functions, and on school buses or other transportation furnished by the school district. Employees in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 16-11-130.1, the Board of Education may authorize certain personnel to possess or carry weapons on any property or in any building owned or leased by the district, at a school function, or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the district, subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Training of approved personnel shall occur prior to their authorization to carry weapons. The training shall be approved in advance by the Superintendent and shall, at a minimum, include training on judgment, pistol shooting, marksmanship, and a review of current laws relating to the use of force for the defense of self or others. The Superintendent may substitute for certain training requirements an individual's prior military or law enforcement service if he or she has previously served as a certified law enforcement officer or has had military service which involved similar weapons training.*
- 2. An approved list of the types and quantity of weapons and ammunition authorized to be possessed or carried shall be prepared and maintained by the Superintendent.*
- 3. Selection of personnel to possess or carry a weapon shall be done strictly on a voluntary basis. The final appointment will be made by the Superintendent consistent with the requirements of this policy. Each employee appointed must be licensed under the laws of the state to carry a firearm and shall be subject to an annual criminal history background check. Approval will not be granted for any employee who has had an employment or other history indicating any type of mental or emotional instability as determined by the Board or Superintendent. The Superintendent shall be able at any time to remove or suspend the authority granted to any employee under this policy; and*
- 4. Weapons possessed or carried by personnel under this paragraph shall be secured as follows: Concealed weapons are permitted if they are carried in a holster and not in a purse, briefcase, bag, or similar other accessory which is not secured on the body. If maintained separate from the body, the weapon shall be maintained in a secured lock safe or similar lock box that cannot be easily accessed by students.*

In addition to those employees appointed pursuant to this policy, the Board recognizes that other exceptions exist under O.C.G.A. § 16-11-127.1. All records regarding the appointment of individual employees and the implementation of this program shall be exempt from production under the Open Records Act as specified in Georgia law.

Board Policy GAMB

Adopted 8/12/2014

Professional Learning Opportunities

The Thomaston-Upson County Board of Education is committed to the establishment and implementation of a comprehensive improvement plan designed to improve educator effectiveness and result in increased student achievement.

A component of the comprehensive improvement plan is a professional learning plan detailing the professional learning process needed to support the major components of the improvement plan. The professional learning plan organizes and directs all professional learning that enhances the knowledge, skills and practices of district personnel, regardless of the funding source.

Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Larry Derico, serves as professional learning coordinator to facilitate the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the district's professional learning. Our plan for professional learning is based upon multiple data sources including, but not limited to, student achievement and teacher/leader effectiveness measures. The plan and its implementation is aligned to rigorous standards for professional learning and is consistent with all requirements of the State Board of Education.

*See Board Policy GAD
Last Revised: 09/08/2015*

Retirement

Participation in a state retirement program is mandatory for all benefit-eligible employees of the school system. The retirement programs are:

PSERS (PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT SYSTEM)

Bus Drivers, Bus Monitors, Custodians, School Food Nutrition, and Maintenance personnel are automatically enrolled in Public School Employee Retirement System (PSERS). The mandatory employee contribution is deducted monthly, September through May of each school year.

TRS (TEACHER RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF GEORGIA)

Teachers, Administrators, Supervisors, Paraprofessionals, Nurses, and Clerical personnel are members of the Teacher Retirement System (TRS). The current employee contribution rate is 6% of the gross salary, and is deducted monthly. More information regarding personal retirement benefits may be located at www.trsga.com.

Salary Deductions

Automatic deductions will be made for the following purposes:

1. Retirement (TRS/PSERS—dependent upon position)
2. Medicare (and Social Security only for those in FICA covered positions)
3. Federal Income Tax
4. Georgia Income Tax
5. Health insurance, when authorized
6. Teacher association dues, when authorized
7. Days of leave in excess of authorized leave
8. Tax sheltered annuity (when authorized)
9. Garnishments, tax levy, child support, etc., when so ordered by the court

All employees are covered by Social Security (FICA) and Medicare Tax. The employee share is payroll deducted, and matching funds are paid by TUCS.

Providing accurate state and federal tax withholding forms, retirement system membership number, and the social security number to the payroll office is a responsibility of the employee.

Overtime Pay/Classified (Support) Personnel

Except as approved on a case by case basis, employees may not work in excess of forty hours in any calendar week. This limitation shall apply notwithstanding the fact that the employee may work in one or more positions, may work for one or more supervisors, may work in one or more capacities, or may work in one or more departments.

Each classified employee who is assigned a duty-free meal period of thirty minutes or more shall take that duty-free meal period, as assigned, and shall conduct no activities for or on behalf of the Board of Education during the duty-free period of time.

If deemed necessary for any classified employee to work in excess of the forty hour limit, compensatory time off may be given at the rate of one and one-half hours for every hour worked in excess of forty hours. Compensatory time must be used within sixty days of accrual.

For more details, read the board policy in its entirety.

*See Board Policy GCRD
Last Revised: 10/14/2014*

Policy: Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of the Board of Education that its employees shall be able to enjoy a work environment free from all forms of discrimination, including sexual harassment.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- 1. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly, as a term or condition of an individual's employment;*
- 2. submission to, or rejection of such conduct by an employee is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or*
- 3. such conduct has the purpose or deliberate effect of substantially interfering with an employee's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.*

Sexual harassment is an unlawful employment practice under federal law, and it is a form of discrimination that is specifically prohibited by the Board of Education. Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary actions.

The Board will take appropriate steps to ensure that all employees are aware of this policy.

An employee who feels that he/she has been subjected to any form of sexual harassment may have his/her concerns addressed through the Employee Complaint Procedure.

*Board Policy GAEB, Adopted 1/14/1992
Last Revised: 1/8/2013*

Policy: Solicitations by Staff

It is the policy of the Thomaston-Upson County Board of Education to prohibit solicitation and distribution on the premises of any school within the system by non-employees except as stipulated in policy GA1. Employees may engage in solicitation and distributions only as outlined below.

Employees are permitted to engage in solicitations or distributions of literature for any group or organization, including charitable organizations, only in accordance with the following restrictions.

- 1. The sale of merchandise is prohibited on school premises.*
- 2. Solicitations and distributions of literature are prohibited during school hours and are permitted on school premises after hours only with prior approval from the administration.*
- 3. Distributions of literature are prohibited in work areas at all times.*

Board Policy GA1A

Adopted: 07/11/1989
Last Revised 06/07/2011

Policy: Tobacco Use

In accordance with the "Georgia Smoke Free Air Act of 2005", smoking shall be prohibited by employees and visitors at all times in any school building or property owned or leased by the school district, or at any time in any school-owned vehicle, including any school buses, or at any on or off campus school sponsored event. This prohibition includes the use of other tobacco products by employees and visitors at all times when on duty for the school district, including when such employees are directly instructing or supervising students. Direct supervision includes coaching, band directing, acting as a sponsor or advisor of a club or similar school organization and other instructional roles. Employees shall not store or possess tobacco or tobacco-related products on their person or in their belongings in such a manner that such products are visible to students.

School district employees who violate this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including reprimand, suspension with or without pay or termination.

Board Policy GAN

Adopted 4/14/1987
Last Revised 01/12/2010

Workers' Compensation

The Thomaston-Upson County Board of Education has Workers Compensation insurance to cover the cost of work-related injury or illness. Work-related accidents must be reported immediately to your principal or the designated Workers Comp personnel at the school. Employees reporting a work-related injury or illness that requires professional medical care must be seen by one of the medical providers listed on the panel of approved physicians for the Thomaston-Upson County Board of Education. The physician panel is posted at each facility. Employees must report injuries in a timely manner to insure that they will be covered and the injury can be established as work-related. Should an employee choose to receive care from a physician who is not on the approved list, such care would be considered unauthorized and the school system would not be responsible for the cost.