

# DICKSON COUNTY SCHOOLS PERSONNEL REFERENCE GUIDE



817 N. Charlotte Street

Dickson, TN 37055

[www.dicksoncountyschools.org](http://www.dicksoncountyschools.org)

615.446.7571

Danny L. Weeks, Ed.D., Director of Schools

## Contents

Welcome & Introduction .....	4
District Leadership.....	4
Board of Education .....	5
Central Office General Information.....	6
SELECTED BOARD POLICIES .....	6
Section 1 – Board Operations .....	6
Section 2 – Fiscal Management .....	6
Section 3 – Support Services .....	6
Section 4 – Instructional Services.....	7
Section 5 – Personnel.....	7
Section 6 – Student Services.....	7
Personnel Files .....	8
Employee Assignments.....	8
Vacancies, Transfers, and Reassignments .....	8
Salaries & Wages.....	9
Payroll Deduction .....	9
Other Benefits .....	9
Employee Assistance Program (EAP) .....	10
Length of School Day .....	10
Professional Development .....	10
Employee Evaluation .....	10
Job Sharing Opportunities.....	11
Involuntary Transfer/Reassignment.....	11
Leaves of Absence – see 5.300.....	11
Sick Leave.....	11
Sick Leave Bank .....	12
Personal Leave .....	12
Bereavement Leave.....	12

Jury / Legal Leave.....	13
School Clinic.....	13
Family& Medical Leave .....	13
Other Extended Leaves .....	13
Workers Compensation.....	14
Instructional Supplies & Materials .....	14
Professionalism.....	14
Child Abuse / Neglect Reporting.....	14
Administrative Leave.....	14
Resignation .....	14
Non-Renewal of Non-tenured Teachers .....	15
Retirement.....	15
Confidentiality / FERPA.....	15
Technology .....	15
Individual Licenses .....	16
Criminal Activity .....	16
Private Vehicles for Transporting Students .....	16
Outside Employment .....	16
Drug / Alcohol Testing For Reasonable Suspicion.....	16
Staff-Student Relations .....	17
Social Media .....	17
Research.....	17
Curriculum .....	17
Grading .....	18
Individual School Orientation.....	18
Acknowledgement Form.....	19

## Welcome & Introduction

Welcome to the Dickson County School System. We are proud that you have elected to work with us as we serve the students of Dickson County. The material covered within this handbook is intended as a method of communicating to employees general district information, rules, and regulations and is not intended to enlarge or diminish any Board policy or administrative procedure. Material contained herein may be superseded by such policy, procedure, or changes in state or federal law. The excerpts and information should in no way be interpreted to replace the entirety of any specific policy. Staff is urged to review the complete policy when additional information is needed. Copies of policy may be found online at the system's website. Any information contained is subject to revision or elimination. No information in this document shall be viewed as an offer, expressed or implied, or a guarantee of any employment of any duration.

Opportunity for employment, as well as continuation and advancement in employment, shall be afforded equally to members of all races, creeds, colors, sexes, religions, ages, national origins, and individuals with disabilities or veteran status with regard only for qualifications for the positions involved. (U.S. Constitution, Amendment XIV; Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX Educational Amendments of 1972; Age Discrimination Act of 1967; Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Public Law 101-336; 42 U.S.C. 1201.)

## District Leadership

Director of Schools .....	Dr. Danny L. Weeks
.....	Eleanor Christy, Receptionist
Business Office .....	Ms. Linda Frazier
.....	Beth Brock, Kayla Hall, Stacie Ross, Connie Sullivan
CTE .....	Ray LeComte
Technology .....	Ben Lewis
.....	Randy Brison, Marilyn Estes, Scott Malugin, Renee Rodriguez,
.....	Antonio Rodriguez, Matt Spann, Tammy Spicer
Federal Programs .....	Dr. Vivian McCord
.....	Carol Floyd
Human Resources .....	Ms. Hillary Hall
.....	Verlette Brown

Instruction

Elementary Education..... Ms. Ernestine Adams

Secondary Education .....Dr. Robbie Faulkner

..... Dr. Mary Collins (RTI), Robbie LeComte (Science/Soc. Stu.)

..... Julie Outlaw (Numeracy), Andrea Rawls (Literacy)

..... Debbie Jarman

School Nutrition..... Mr. Jason Collins

.....Donna Charbbonneau / Thom Spicer

Special Education

Elementary ..... Mr. Tommy Lee

Secondary..... Ms. Linda Koellein

..... Sonya Fossie-Williams, Laurie Parker

Student Services..... Mr. Steve Sorrells

..... Kim Bishop, Attendance

..... Karen Henson, School Nursing / Joan Goodmiller, School Health

Transportation / Maintenance .....Ms. Melissa Garton / Mr. Gerald Clifton

..... Starr Hagewood, Joyce Buchanan, Yolanda Bell

**Board of Education**

Kirk Vandivort .....District 1, Vice-Chairman

Rick Chandler .....District 2

Steve Haley .....District 3

Tim Potter .....District 4, Chairman

Phil Buckner.....District 5

Josh Lewis.....District 6

Board meetings are held the fourth Thursday of each month unless publicized otherwise. Meetings are held at the Central Office, 817 N. Charlotte, Dickson, TN and begin at 7:00 p.m.

## **Central Office General Information**

The Central Office is staffed between 7:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. weekdays. The main telephone number is 615.446.7571. The office is closed on Federal or other officially announced holidays.

## **SELECTED BOARD POLICIES**

This handbook cannot contain all policies which are relevant to employees. However, it is designed so that employees will have be aware of the major policies which impact their work. All policies may be found on the district website. Employees should familiarize themselves with each.

### **Section 1 – Board Operations**

Employees should review policies in this section which deal with day-to-day operations of the Board of Education and day-to-day campus management. Specific policies to become familiar with would include:

- Policy 1.501 – campus visitors
- Policy 1.600 – policy implementation
- Policy 1.803 – tobacco-free workplace
- Policy 1.804 – drug-free workplace
- Policy 1.805 – e-mail communications

### **Section 2 – Fiscal Management**

Employees should review policies in this section which deal with accountability of public funds. Specific policies designed by the school administrator will explain the collecting, accounting, and depositing of all funds.

### **Section 3 – Support Services**

Employees should review policies in this section which deal with student security and safety. Specific policies to become familiar with would include:

- Policy 3.201 – responsibility for school safety

Policy 3.202 – responsibility for emergency preparedness plans

Policy 3.300 – responsibility for assigned materials and equipment

Policy 3.404 – use of private vehicles

## **Section 4 – Instructional Services**

Employees should review policies in this section which deal with instructional aspects. More specific guidelines designed by the school administrator will be provided to staff. Specific policies to become familiar with would include:

Policy 4.302 – Field trip guidelines

Policy 4.408 – Multimedia guidelines

Policy 4.501 – Use of Volunteers in schools

Policy 4.600– Grading Systems

Policy 4.701 – Test Security Guidelines

Policy 4.801 – Test security guidelines

## **Section 5 – Personnel**

Section 5 of the Board Policy manual contains the policies which deal with employment issues. Many of these issues will be covered in some detail in this manual.

## **Section 6 – Student Services**

Section 6 of the Board Policy manual contains the policies which deal with student issues, particularly attendance and discipline. More specific guidelines designed by the school administrator will be provided to staff. Specific policies to become familiar with would include:

Policy 6.200 - Student attendance guidelines

Policy 6.304 – Student Discrimination, Bullying & Harassment

Policy 6.313 – Student disciplinary guidelines

Policy 6.405 – Student medications

Policy 6.600 – Student records

Policy 6.701 – Extracurricular Activities

## **Personnel Files**

An employee's personnel files are defined as the employment record maintained at the Central Office. Such files may include, but not be limited to, initial employment documents, placement records, certifications, disciplinary records, and letters of commendation. No anonymous material shall be maintained in the personnel file. Grievance materials shall not be included in the personnel file. Personnel files will be available for inspection during regular business hours.

An employee shall be provided a copy of negative/derogatory material considered for placement in the personnel file, and be given an opportunity to prepare a written response to such material, which shall be attached upon submission. No adverse material shall be placed in the personnel file of an employee after severance. Central Office personnel will maintain a log indicating the person(s) who have requested to examine a personnel file. Legally permissible copies of documents within the file may be obtained for a minimal cost.

## **Employee Assignments**

An assignment is defined as the specific grade/subject level or specific duties assigned. Teachers shall be assigned to teach where they meet state and federal mandates. Except in cases of emergency, changes in teaching assignments for the coming year will be made no later than one week before the end of the current school year. In case of emergency, employees will be notified as soon as administratively possible. Non-certified employees are considered "at-will" employees.

On occasion, other opportunities are made available to employees who wish to earn additional monies. The Director/Designee shall determine the need for extra assignments such as additional teaching, additional classes, extended contracts, before/after care, or tutoring.

## **Vacancies, Transfers, and Reassignments**

Vacancies (which require professional certification) shall be posted in the Central Office and on the System website. Such notices shall be posted for a minimum of five calendar days. Any position created within two weeks of the first instructional day may be filled on a temporary basis without posting. Any employee wishing to transfer to a vacant position should complete an online application indicating the desire to transfer to a specific posted position. Current employees with appropriate certification will be interviewed by the receiving principal. The receiving principal will make a recommendation to the HR Office.



An employee serving in their last year before achieving tenure shall not be transferred unless the Director of Schools believes it is in the best interest of the system.

When vacancies occur within a building, the principal, with the approval of the Director of Schools, may make reassignments before a notice of vacancy is posted.

## **Salaries & Wages**

Base salaries are calculated on the current salary & experience matrix. Salary supplements will be added in accordance with current supplement rates. Official pay days for school-based certified personnel are the twentieth day of the month unless announced otherwise. Other employees will be paid on the last day of the month, unless announced otherwise.

## **Payroll Deductions**

Payroll deductions are allowed for the employee portion of medical and dental premiums, additional life insurance when purchased through approved vendors, contributions to retirement accounts through approved vendors, DCEA dues and premiums for other approved products/services offered through the System.

## **Other Benefits**

### **FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNTS (FSA)**

Flexible spending accounts (FSA) are offered to full-time employees as a provision of the Section 125 Plan which allows an employee to deposit a portion of gross income, tax free, into a spending account which is used to pay for medical, dental, and vision expenses as well as daycare expenses. Eligible employees must apply for the accounts on an annual basis.

**HEALTH INSURANCE:** Full-time employees: Receive 100% of the cost of an individual policy, or the equivalent amount if applied to an employee plus child or employee plus spouse. If the employee elects family coverage, the employee will receive 45% of the family policy.

**Retirees:** Certified employees who retire and are eligible for retirement benefits under TCRS with 15 years' experience, immediately prior to retirement, shall receive ½ of the local cost of active employee insurance until the effective date of Medicare coverage or three years after retirement, whichever comes first.

**DENTAL INSURANCE:** Full-time employees: Receive 100% of the cost of an individual policy applied to an individual or a family plan.

## LIFE INSURANCE:

Each full-time employee shall receive a \$10,000 dollar term life insurance coverage, which continues after retirement.

**SICK LEAVE REIMBURSEMENT:** Certified employees with 15 years of experience immediately prior to retirement will be eligible for reimbursement of unused sick leave at a rate of 25% of their daily rate as determined by TCRS.

## **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

Employees enrolled in the Health Insurance Plan have access to the Employee Assistance Program through the State as well. Confidential counseling services and/or referral services are provided to all covered employees and eligible dependents who may be experiencing personal or work place problems. EAP may be reached at any time by calling 1-800-308-4934. EAP handles a wide range of problems including those related to emotional, family, marital, stress, financial,

## **Length of School Day**

The Official School Calendar is published to include work days, holidays, and other professional days. Specific work days and times will be provided by the direct supervisor. The normal workday for teachers and educational assistant is 7 ½ hours, unless otherwise announced. All teachers are to have a duty free lunch period. Additional time may be required of certified employees to fulfill extra duties and responsibilities including, but not limited to, faculty meetings, bus duty, parent conferences, extracurricular activities, and similar requirements of the profession.

## **Professional Development**

Certified employees of the district are required to earn 30 hours of professional development per year. Principals / the District may define the expectations a teacher's PD plan. Employees are encouraged to take advantage of other opportunities. Employees may not use professional/personal/sick leave in lieu of attending required professional development without prior permission of the Director of Schools.

## **Employee Evaluation**

The goal of employee evaluation is to improve and maintain individual work skills and performance. The State Model of evaluation (TEAM) shall be used for certificated employees. Other employees will be evaluated using a locally developed instrument. Employees shall be informed of the evaluation procedure(s), criteria, and instrument(s) to be used during the school year, and of the evaluator's responsibilities.

## **Job Sharing Opportunities**

The concept of voluntary job sharing between two people or voluntary part-time employment is recognized as a means of providing a flexible employment opportunity to help meet the varying needs of the school and the employee. A predetermined and agreed distribution of work between both sharers in terms of hours and responsibilities shall be established. In all cases, the best interest of students will be considered.

## **Administrative Positions**

Administrative vacancies shall be posted in the Central Office and on the System website. Such notices shall be posted for a minimum of five calendar days. Any position created within three weeks of the first instructional day may be filled on a temporary basis without posting. Any employee wishing to apply for an administrative position should complete an administrative application for a specific posted position. Current employees with appropriate certification will be interviewed by the receiving principal/supervisor.

## **Supplemented Positions**

Supplemented positions are those positions which receive additional compensation for additional work. Such positions shall be posted in the Central Office and on the System website. Such notices shall be posted for a minimum of five calendar days. Any position created within two weeks of the first instructional day may be filled on a temporary basis without posting. Any employee wishing to transfer to a vacant position should complete an online application indicating the desire to transfer to a specific posted position. Current employees with appropriate certification will be interviewed by the receiving principal. The receiving principal will make a recommendation to the HR Office.

## **Involuntary Transfer/Reassignment**

The Director of Schools may transfer/assign any employee to any position when it is deemed to be in the best interest of the System.

## **Leaves of Absence – see 5.300**

### **Sick Leave**

Sick leave (TCA 49-5-710) is defined as absence because of illness of an employee from natural causes, accident, quarantine, or illness of a member of the immediate family member (spouse, parent(s), child, grandparent(s), sibling(s), and corresponding in-laws. An employee shall receive one sick leave day for each 20 days of employment. Employees utilizing sick leave may be required to provide a written statement from a licensed medical physician. Requests for

leaves expecting to exceed ten (10) days shall be made in writing on appropriate forms prior to taking the leave.

An employee may accumulate an unlimited number of sick leave days. An employee in need of sick leave shall be allowed to use unearned sick leave up to the amount of days which the employee may accumulate during the remainder of the school year. If the employee leaves service before the leave days are earned, payment for days used but not earned will be deducted from the final paycheck. When official notification is verified, the System recognizes accumulated sick leave days earned from previous employment by an agency, system, department, institution, of the state who participates in the State of Tennessee sick leave program.

### **Sick Leave Bank**

A Sick Leave Bank is available to all full-time employees who have suffered an unplanned personal illness, injury, disability or quarantine and whose personal sick leave is exhausted. To participate, the employee must initially contribute one day to the bank. Enrollment takes place during August, September, or October. Contact the Director's Office for more information.

### **Personal Leave**

All full-time employees shall earn one day of personal leave for each half year employed. (2 per year). Personal leave should be requested one day in advance, except in cases of emergency. Personal leave may not be taken (a) when more than 10% of the faculty is absent; (b) during a student exam period; (c) immediately preceding or following a holiday/vacation period; (d) for less than a full day; (e) on a parent-teacher conference day; or (f) for a scheduled professional development day, unless approved by the Director of Schools. Any unused personal leave shall be converted to sick leave.

### **Bereavement Leave**

All employees shall be entitled to take three (3) days of bereavement leave for the death of a member of his/her immediate family. Immediate family shall be defined as parent, spouse, or child. Said leave shall not be deducted from employee's accumulated sick leave or personal leave. Bereavement days must be taken consecutively unless an exception is approved by the Director of Schools. No employee is entitled to take more than six days bereavement leave in any given school year.

## **Jury / Legal Leave**

Employees are expected to fulfill their civic duties in service to the court. Employees should request of the court, a service window during non-instructional periods. The employee shall present upon request, written evidence that s/he had been summoned to serve on a jury. The employee shall be entitled to the usual compensation. Compensation earned for jury service may be kept by the employee. Legal leave with pay shall also be granted to a professional employee who is required by subpoena to appear in court or in any job-related judicial proceeding for the length of time necessary to make appearances in court. In cases where employees appear in court because of a personal interest, or voluntarily appear on behalf of family or friends, leave may be granted without pay.

## **School Clinic**

Employees have access to the school clinic located adjacent to Central Office. The clinic offers primary care and related services to all employees, at no charge to the employee. Insured dependents have access to all services free of charge. Uninsured dependents may use the clinic for sick visits at a charge of \$20. Office hours are posted, but generally 8:00 – 4:30. For questions or to schedule appointments call 740-5900 or email [schoolclinic@dcbe.org](mailto:schoolclinic@dcbe.org)

## **Family & Medical Leave**

Anyone who has been employed for at least 12 months by the school system or anyone who has at least 1,250 hours of service (hours used for leave, even FMLA leave, shall not be credited for service for purposes of FMLA eligibility) during the previous 12-month period is eligible for Family Medical Leave. The 12-month period in Dickson Co. runs concurrently with the fiscal year, July 1 to June 30.

## **Other Extended Leaves**

Other leaves of absences may be granted by the Director of Schools. Employees may have the opportunity to continue participation, at their own expense, in group insurance plans / benefit programs subject to restrictions of the vendor. Such leaves may include military service, recuperation of health, parental, association, political, educational improvement, or other good cause.

Except in cases of emergency, such leave requests must be made in writing to the Director at least thirty days prior to the leave date. Leaves shall be from a specified date until a specified date. Leaves will be filled on a temporary basis. The employee who is on leave shall return to the same or a comparable position upon return from leave. Employees shall not accumulate sick leave during the leave.

## **Workers Compensation**

Injuries received while on the job shall be reported to the direct supervisor within 24 hours of the occurrence or as soon as possible. Questions regarding Workers Compensation should be directed to the Finance Office, attention Beth Brock.

## **Instructional Supplies & Materials**

Each teacher is allotted \$200 for instructional supplies and materials. Teachers may wish to “pool” a portion of their money to be spent on larger purchases for the school.

## **Professionalism**

All employees of the Dickson County Schools are representatives of the School System and the education profession. Employees are expected to maintain high moral standards and to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the teaching profession and as role models for students. The TEA Code of Conduct is a model of expected behavior.

<http://www.teateachers.org/teaching-tennessee/active-teachers/code-ethics>. Employees shall always maintain appropriate relationships with students.

## **Child Abuse / Neglect Reporting**

All employees shall report cases of abuse or neglect to the juvenile judge, Department of Children’s Services or the Office of the Sheriff or the chief law enforcement official of the municipality where the child resides. Employees are encouraged to notify their immediate supervisor of such reports. Forms should be completed at :

<http://www.tn.gov/youth/childsafety.htm> or calls should be made to 1.877.237.0004

## **Administrative Leave**

The Director of Schools may place any employee on Administrative leave for the protection of the employee or the System. Employees shall be given notice of such leave and given reasonable opportunity to offer explanation of the issue in question.

## **Resignation**

All employees shall give a written notice of resignation to the Human Resource Office as soon as he/she knows of the resignation. Every certificated employee is expected to give a thirty-day notice.

## **Non-Renewal of Non-tenured Teachers**

The Director of Schools is under no obligation to re-employ non-tenured teachers at the end of their contract period. If the Director of Schools determines not to renew the contract of a non-tenured teacher, written notice of non-renewal shall be hand delivered or sent to the employee by registered mail so that it will be received by the employee prior to the last instructional day.

## **Retirement**

All full-time employees will be members of the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System. Retirement and Social Security will automatically be deducted from the employee's check each month. The Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS) is a defined benefit plan for eligible employees who become members. Members become vested in TCRS with five (5) years of creditable service. Employees may obtain more detailed information concerning retirement through the website at [www.treasury.state.tn.us/tcrs](http://www.treasury.state.tn.us/tcrs). An online calculator may be found at this site which enables members to secure a projection of their retirement benefits. Employees should establish an account by going to [www.mytcrs.tn.gov](http://www.mytcrs.tn.gov). Questions about retiring should be directed to Retire Ready at 800-922-7772.

## **Confidentiality / FERPA**

All student records shall be confidential. Only authorized school officials may have access to student information for legitimate educational purposes. Employees shall abide by FERPA regulations with regard to student grades, behavior, and other school issues. Personnel should not discuss such issues with anyone other than employees with a need to know or parents/guardians.

## **Technology**

The School System provides access to school computer network services to students and teachers to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. Employee e-mail addresses should be limited to school business only. Students are responsible for good behavior on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or a school hallway. Inappropriate use of language or threats, utilization of networks for prohibited or illegal activities, the intentional spreading of embedded messages, or the use of other programs with the potential of damaging or destroying programs or data may cause access privileges to be revoked, school disciplinary action to be taken, and/or appropriate legal action to be taken. A written permission/agreement form which specifies acceptable uses, rules of on-line behavior, access privileges, and penalties for policy/procedural violations must be signed.

## **Individual Licenses**

It is the responsibility of the employee to attain and maintain a Tennessee teaching license and hold appropriate endorsements and qualifications for the position(s) to which they are assigned. Prior to the end of the validity period, you should contact the HR office for procedures regarding renewal for ample time to complete the renewal process.

## **Criminal Activity**

Any employee who is arrested and/or charged and/or detained due to criminal activity is responsible for notifying the Director of Schools / Designee within 24 hours of the arrest, charge or detainment.

## **Private Vehicles for Transporting Students**

From time to time, certain employees may need to use their private vehicles for school purposes. With the use of private vehicles for school business, the person must have permission of an appropriate school representative (Central Office or school administrator, athletic director, or head coach) and provide proof of his/her valid driver's license and liability insurance.

## **Outside Employment**

Outside employment is permitted so long as it does not interfere with performance of school responsibilities and in no way detrimentally reflects on the school system.

## **Drug / Alcohol Testing For Reasonable Suspicion**

When a supervisor or other authorized designee reasonably suspects that an employee's work performance or on-the-job behavior may have been affected in any way by drugs, alcohol or other substance, or that an employee has otherwise violated the System's Drug Free Workplace Policy, the employee may be required to submit to a breath and/or urine sample for drug and alcohol testing. When a supervisor observes or is notified of behaviors or events that lead the supervisor to believe that the employee is in violation of the Drug Free Workplace Policy, the supervisor shall notify the Director of Schools / designee. If the designated authority agrees, he/she may order the employee to be tested.

## **Media Relations**

Because much of the information we work with is confidential or sensitive, all contacts by media representatives will be referred to the Director of Schools/Designee. If contacted by the press about work-related matters, refer the media representative to the Director of Schools.



## **Staff-Student Relations**

Staff members shall use good judgment in their relationships with students beyond their work responsibilities and/or outside the school setting and shall avoid excessive informal and social involvement with individual students. Romantic relationships between employees and students shall be prohibited. Appropriate disciplinary action, including dismissal, may be taken for violation of this policy.

## **Social Media**

The System respects the right of employees to use social media sites, as well as personal websites and blogs, but it is important that employees' personal use of these sites does not damage the reputation of, nor cast an untruthful negative light upon the System– its employees, its students, or their families. Social media sites shall not be accessed through the Schools' network at any time. Personal usage of social media sites using personal technology which does not use the system network is limited to duty-free breaks, lunch periods, and off-duty time. Employees should exercise care in setting appropriate boundaries between their personal online behavior and that of an employee of the System, understanding that what seems private in the digital world may often become public, even without their knowledge or consent. We strongly encourage all employees to carefully review the privacy settings on any and all applicable social media and networking sites they use, and exercise care and good judgment when posting content and information on such sites.

When using a social media site, an employee is strongly discouraged from including current, underage students as 'friends', 'followers', or any other similar terminology used by various sites without written permission from the student's parent.

## **Research**

Staff members engaged in a research project during the work day or who use district resources or students, either for study toward advanced work or for use in classroom instruction, may do so only with the prior approval of the Director of Schools. Privacy rights of students or other individuals involved in such research projects must be maintained. Publications, instructional materials, articles, models and other devices prepared by staff members for district use with district time, money and facilities as part of the employee's job responsibilities remain the property of the district.

## **Curriculum**

Curriculum guides are available for all courses taught in the district. Curriculum guides reflect a consistent and coherent structure for the education of district students. The curriculum established for the courses and grade levels of this district provides the flexibility necessary to meet the individual needs of students and their diverse learning rates and styles. Deviations from established curriculum, textbooks and instructional materials, are not permitted without approval of the building principal and/or the appropriate supervisor of instruction. Though teaching methodology may vary, classroom instruction is expected to reflect "best practices", consistent with research on effective instruction.

## **Grading**

The evaluation of student progress is a primary responsibility of all teachers. The highest possible level of student achievement is a common goal of both the district and the home. As a close working relationship between the district and the home is essential to the accomplishment of this goal, regular communications with parents is essential. Teachers should use a variety of communication devices including email, telephone and personal conferences as well as written grade reports to keep parents well informed. At the beginning of the grading period, students and parents are to be informed regarding the basis of the grades and the methods to be used in determining grades. Grades shall be kept up-to-date on the system's grade portal (Skyward).

## **Individual School Orientation**

You will receive an orientation from your principal or supervisor for your particular position. This orientation should include the following items: tour of the facility, introduction to the staff, school organizational structure, daily time schedule, absence notification / leave forms, curriculum guides, special equipment or supplies, lunch procedures, supervisory procedures, purchasing, and extra duties.

## Acknowledgement Form

I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Dickson County Schools' Employee Handbook. I understand that no information in this document shall be viewed as an offer, expressed or implied, or as a guarantee of any employment of any duration. I understand that any rules, policies, practices, or procedures described in the Handbook may be modified, varied, or deleted by the Administration at any time. I understand that this Handbook contains references to Board policies which may be accessed in entirety through the System's website. All employees of Dickson County Schools are responsible for adhering to the expectations set forth in the Dickson County Employee Handbook.

Failure to read these expectations does not exclude an employee from his/he responsibilities outlined within.

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Employee Printed Name

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Employee Signature

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Date