

Somerset County Public Schools



Employee Handbook

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Somerset County Public School Employees:

Our Somerset County Public Schools exist to provide the best possible educational opportunities and success for our children in the best possible learning environment. Quality learning environments require healthy working conditions: communication is continuous; appropriate practice is the rule; and, continuous improvement is the goal.

In order to promote our effectiveness with our students and assure your well being as an employee, the personnel department has developed this **Somerset County Public Schools Employee Handbook**. The handbook is designed to serve as a comprehensive reference and resource on a wide range of employment subjects. It is important to note that the handbook references and does not replace other significant documents such as negotiated agreements, administrative policies and regulations, and school system office rules as guidelines.

Please set aside some time to familiarize yourself with this handbook so that it will serve you well in times of need as a convenient and user friendly tool. Be assured that our offices remain willing to assist you in any way we can and are glad to receive your questions. The handbook is not meant to replace one-to-one personal contact.

Thank you for your dedication to our students and your commitment to Somerset County Public Schools. May you find your work days productive and rewarding.

Sincerely,

Karen-Lee N. Brofee, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools

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SCHOOL SYSTEM DISCLAIMER

The Somerset County Public School System is a changing system. As such, the superintendent and Somerset County Board of Education reserve the right to amend, modify or delete provisions in this Employee Handbook without prior notice. These changes will occur administratively in the normal process of change, or through direct Board of Education action.

This handbook is designed as a general guide for school system employees to provide basic information about matters of interest and concern to employees and the school system leadership. The handbook contains brief descriptions of many items and often contains references to negotiated agreements, school system offices, and administrative policies and regulations. The handbook is not intended to replace these resources, but rather to provide a one-document summary and reference point of appropriate items which would be useful to all employees, and especially to those employees new to the system.

The handbook is not a contract. In fact, only the Board of Education has the authority to enter into a contract with an employee. In addition, the handbook does not replace or supersede any negotiated agreement, Board of Education policy or administrative regulation. The superintendent and the Board of Education reserve the right to modify or amend any Board of Education policy or administrative regulation at any time.

If there is any inconsistency between the contents of this handbook and Board of Education policy or administrative regulations, Board of Education policy and administrative regulations will govern.

The Somerset County Public School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, national origin, religion,

INTRODUCTION

It is the vision of the Somerset County Public Schools for each and every student to achieve his or her individual potential in a safe, positive and nurturing environment.

Our Mission

The mission of Somerset County Public Schools is to provide all students with an equitable opportunity to develop their abilities to their full potential and to obtain the knowledge, skills, and values needed to succeed in a global society. Somerset County Public Schools is committed to unite the best efforts of school system employees, students, parents, and community members to achieve this goal.

Our Vision

We envision Somerset County Public Schools as an educational system that will serve as a magnet to draw students, teachers and businesses to the community. We will have:

- ▶ schools that provide a safe, positive, clean, equitable and nurturing learning environment.
- ▶ schools with parents as active participants in the educational process.
- ▶ schools that closely interact with the community.
- ▶ schools in which education provides the foundation for students to meet the challenges of the new millennium while maximizing their desire to continue lifelong learning.
- ▶ schools from which every student graduates as a productive member of society.

Our Goals

By the Year 2003:

- ▶ all Somerset County Public Schools will provide a safe, orderly and equitable learning environment for every student and teacher.
- ▶ all Somerset County Public Schools students will achieve academic excellence by applying both basic and higher order thinking skills to solve problems and to communicate effectively.
- ▶ Somerset County Public Schools will provide for all students the rigorous instruction that utilizes state-of-the-art technology and teaching practices to maximize the desire for lifelong learning.
- ▶ community stakeholders and all parents of Somerset County Public Schools will be involved in the educational process.
- ▶ Somerset County Public Schools will be an educational organization in which technology is a standard component of its daily operation and all programs are effectively evaluated based on current research and best practices.

Programs and policies of the public schools are established by the five-member Somerset County Board of Education.

Board members are elected and each serves terms of four (4) years.

The day-to-day administration of the school system is the responsibility of the superintendent of schools, who is appointed by the school board for a term of four (4) years. There is no limit to the number of terms a superintendent may serve.

EMPLOYEE ETHICS

Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees

All employees of the Somerset County Public Schools are expected to make every effort to create an atmosphere that nurtures the educational process and provides a safe environment for employees and students. All employees shall demonstrate responsible and ethical conduct toward students, fellow employees, parents and the community.

These standards are intended to define ethical conduct for all employees of the Somerset County Public Schools and to provide guidelines for professional conduct expected by the Board of Education and the community it serves.

Essentials for Success

The school system sets high expectations for its employees. Each individual is expected to perform assigned duties in a productive manner. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential. Each employee is expected to be at work, to be on time and to work consistently and effectively. All employees are expected to work in a manner that is safe and contributes to a harmonious environment. Staff members are urged to avoid words or actions which can contribute to a hostile work environment. Any employee either arrested, charged or convicted of a crime other than a minor traffic violation must immediately report the offense and the related information to their immediate supervisor, the superintendent and the supervisor of human resources. Falsification of information on an application will not be tolerated. Each employee is expected to perform in a professional manner at all times.

I. Employee Ethical Conduct

The employee shall maintain the highest ethical standards by respecting and obeying the applicable laws of the State of Maryland, demonstrating personal integrity, and displaying absolute honesty toward fellow employees, students, parents, and the community.

1. All employees shall adhere to all Board of Education policies, school system procedures, and legal standards of the State of Maryland.
2. No employee shall intentionally misrepresent official policies of the Board of Education.
3. No employee shall use his or her institutional or professional position for personal or partisan gain.
4. All employees will exercise fiscal responsibility with public funds entrusted to their care.
5. All employees have the right and responsibility to recognize illegal or improper situations and seek their resolution. Where necessary, in accordance with the negotiated agreement and Board of Education policy, employees have the responsibility to report such behavior to their supervisor.
6. No employee shall discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, disability, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, political or religious beliefs, socioeconomic status, family or cultural background.

EMPLOYEE ETHICS

Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees

II. Ethical Conduct toward Colleagues

1. All employees will treat colleagues in a dignified and just manner and ensure equitable treatment for all employees.
2. No employee shall disclose confidential information concerning colleagues unless disclosure is for professional purposes or required by law.
3. While performing professional duties, no employee shall make a false statement concerning a colleague or the colleague's actions

III. Ethical Conduct toward Students

1. All employees will deal considerately with each student seeking to solve all matters in a fair and just manner.
2. No employee shall date or engage in sexual conduct of any nature with a student. (Additional details are provided in Policy 700-4.)
3. No employee shall reveal confidential information concerning students unless the disclosure is for professional purposes or is required by law. (Additional details are provided in Policy 600-33.)
4. No employee of the Board of Education shall exclude a student from participating in any program, deny benefits or grant an advantage to any student on the basis of race, color, sex, disability, national origin, marital status, political or religious beliefs, socioeconomic status, family or cultural background.

IV. Ethical Conduct toward Parents and Community

1. All employees will deal considerately with parents, guardians, and other community members.
2. All employees will make every effort to understand community standards and recognize cultural influences and how they affect the educational process.
3. No employee shall interfere with a student or parent's exercise of political and citizenship rights and responsibilities.
4. In the normal course of their activities, all employees shall present a positive image of the school system to the community.

V. Standards Test

Whenever employees are confronted with a matter of right and wrong that requires a decision concerning personal behavior, the following questions should be used to guide the employee's actions:

1. Are my actions illegal?
2. Do my actions violate school board policy or procedures?
3. Do my actions violate the community standards for proper behavior?
4. Do my actions interfere with the proper image of a professional employee of the school system and or interfere with my ability to do my assigned duties?

**If the answer to any of these questions is "YES,"
DO NOT ENGAGE IN THE ACTION!**

EMPLOYEE ETHICS

Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees

Under no circumstances may an employee of the Somerset County Board of Education be involved in any of the following activities or behavior:

1. Immorality
2. Misconduct in office, which includes knowing failure to report suspected child abuse in violation of 5-704 of the Family Law Article
3. Insubordination
4. Willful neglect of duty
5. Any use, possession or sale of an illegal drug
6. Any intentional misuse of any over-the-counter drugs
7. Any unlawful use of alcohol

Employee Rights and Obligations

1. Employees have a right to reasonably consistent and predictable employer responses to violation of rules.
2. Employees have a right to fair discipline based on facts.
3. Employees have a right to reasonably question the facts and present a case.
4. Employees have a right to appeal the disciplinary decision.
5. Employees have an obligation to cooperate with an internal investigation.
6. Employees have a right to obtain their own representation.

Employer Responsibilities

1. The employer has an obligation to investigate violations of rules, regulations, and policies.
2. The employer must ensure that employees are treated fairly and consistently.
3. The employer must ensure that employees have been informed of directives, policies, regulations, or operating procedures.
4. The employer must consider the discipline process as a corrective tool to modify unacceptable behavior.
5. The employer should use progressive discipline as appropriate.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

All employees of the Somerset County Public Schools must make a report to the Department of Social Services (DSS) when they have reason to suspect that a child has been neglected, or physically or sexually abused, or that a child has been the subject of mental injury.

EMPLOYEE ETHICS

Defining Child Abuse and Neglect:

PHYSICAL ABUSE: The physical injury (not necessarily visible) of a child, under the age of 18, by a parent, a person with permanent or temporary care, custody or supervision, or a household or family member.

MENTAL INJURY: The observable, identifiable and substantial impairment of a child's mental or psychological ability to function by a parent or person with permanent or temporary care, custody or supervision, or a household or family member.

SEXUAL ABUSE: Any act or acts involving sexual molestation or exploitation, including incest, rape, carnal knowledge, sodomy, or unnatural or perverted sexual practices on a minor child by a parent, a person with permanent or temporary care, custody or supervision, or a household or family member.

NEGLECT: The leaving of a child unattended, or any other failure to give proper care and attention to a child that may indicate a child's health or welfare is harmed or at risk of harm by any parent, or a person with permanent or temporary care, custody or supervision, or a household or family member.

Procedures for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect:

STEP 1: Contact the Child Protection Unit of the Department of Social Services (DSS) at 410-677-4200 between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

STEP 2: Complete the "Report of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect" form.

STEP 3: At the same time or immediately following the initial call to DSS, Somerset County Public School employees will report all related information to the principal or designee.

STEP 4: When the individual being reported is a Somerset County Board of Education employee or volunteer in the Somerset County Public Schools, following the initial call to DSS, the reporting person, the school principal or designee must contact the office of student services at 410-621-6247.

STEP 5: Mail the completed form within 48 hours to the addresses shown on the form.

EMPLOYEE ETHICS

Dating between Employees and Students

Employees and adult volunteers shall exercise reasonable care in protecting students from harm. Employees and adult volunteers shall exhibit professional and appropriate relationships with students.

1. Employees and adult volunteers shall not date or engage in sexual conduct of any nature with any student.
2. Principals and supervisors shall review this policy with employees and adult volunteers at the beginning of each school year.
3. A violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, which may include written reprimand, suspension or dismissal.

Sexual Harassment

The Board of Education of the Somerset County Public Schools is committed to maintaining an environment free from sexual harassment from any source. Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature. Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. verbal harassment, such as derogatory comments or expressions, slurs, or unwanted sexual advances or invitations;
2. visual harassment, such as derogatory posters, photographs, cartoons, drawings, or gestures;
3. physical harassment, such as assault, unwanted or offensive touching, blocking of normal movement; and
4. retaliation for having reported or threatened to report harassment.

Whenever possible, any student or employee who believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment, should make it clear to the offender in a firm and direct manner that such behavior is offensive and unwelcome.

Students or employees alleging sexual harassment may file a complaint with the principal or supervisor. If the complaint is being made against an employee, the person making the complaint may directly contact the office of human resources at 410-621-6238.

If the complaint is being made against a student, the person making the complaint may directly contact the office of the specialist for student services at 410-621-6247. It will be the responsibility of every principal and supervisor to recognize acts of sexual harassment and take necessary action to ensure that such instances are addressed promptly, fairly, and effectively. Filing of a complaint or otherwise reporting sexual harassment will not affect the future educational program of the student or the employee's job status.

Any student who is in violation will be subject to appropriate actions which may include counseling, suspension, or expulsion. Any employee who is in violation will be subject to appropriate actions which may include counseling, suspension, or termination of employment.

Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace

All buildings and properties owned by the Board of Education are designated as drug and alcohol free workplaces. Compliance with the standards of conduct in the policy is mandatory. Violations of the policy will result in notification of appropriate law enforcement agencies and in the imposition of disciplinary sanctions which may include suspension or termination of employment.

The policy statement can be found in the Board of Education's Policies Manual under policy 700-5.

Tobacco Free School Environment

All buildings and properties owned by the Board of Education are designated as smoke-free workplaces.

The sale or use of tobacco in any form is prohibited in school buildings at all times.

The sale or use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on all school grounds during the official school day.

The policy statement can be found in the Board of Education's Policies Manual under policy 700-6.

A. Definitions

- (1) "Official school day" means the regular school day from 7:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., or any modification there of established by the supervisor.
- (2) "School buildings" means school system owned or leased buildings.
- (3) "School grounds" means school system owned or leased land that surrounds a school building.
- (4) "Tobacco" means products derived from the tobacco plant are smoked, chewed, sniffed, or otherwise consumed. This shall not include nicotine replacement therapy.

B. Tobacco Use

- (1) The sale or use of tobacco in any form is prohibited in school buildings at all times effective August 1, 1993.
- (2) The sale or use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on school grounds during the official school day effective August 1, 1993.

EMPLOYEE ETHICS

Electronic Mail Regulations and Rules

The Somerset County Public Schools has adopted the following regulations and rules regarding access to and disclosure of electronic mail sent or received by school system employees using the school system's electronic mail system, and the proper use of the electronic mail system:

1. The Somerset County Public School System provides electronic mail service to employees, at school system expense, for their use in conducting school system business.
2. All messages are the property of the school system, and employees have no expectation of privacy with respect to such messages. The school system reserves the right to access and disclose the contents of employee electronic mail messages.
3. Accessing messages intended for others is a violation of school system regulations and constitutes grounds for disciplinary action.

Security Procedures for Computer Data

Computers and computer information are a significant school system resource. As such, they must be kept secure and be used only by authorized persons for approved and legitimate purposes. The school system is ultimately responsible for all information which it prepares or processes. It has therefore, implemented data security procedures to ensure that computers and computer information are properly managed. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action or prosecution under local, state, or federal laws.

School system data consist of confidential as well as public documents and other information considered to be critical to the missions of individual departments and the school system as a whole. Access to information is on a “need to know” basis only. The intent of the data security procedures is to ensure the confidentiality, availability and integrity of data; to reduce the risk of data loss, and to preserve the school system’s rights and remedies in the event of such a loss.

Each employee is responsible for understanding and complying with the data security procedures.

1. All school system information shall be protected against theft, malicious damage, unauthorized access, tampering, and loss.
2. All school system computer systems shall include controls that will ensure that the appropriate privacy and confidentiality of data are maintained and that data accuracy and integrity are preserved throughout the life of the application.
3. All systems shall implement backup and contingency plans to ensure that operations or functions may be continued if any equipment or personnel become unavailable. All employees shall use backup functions and contingency plans regularly to ensure that any data, equipment, or personnel are available when needed by the school system.
4. Users accessing any sensitive school system information will be required to submit sufficient IDENTIFICATION and AUTHENTICATION to ensure that they have access only to the data they are authorized to use. Each user will be responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of his or her identification and authentication.
5. Communications must undertaken only over dedicated lines. Other communication facilities (e.g., dial-up) will be considered only if an appropriate level of protection can be ensured.

It is the school system’s responsibility to ensure adequate security awareness training for all system employees. Related policies which may be consulted include the school system policy on disclosure of information, COMAR:13A.08.02.03, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and non-print Media and the Copyright Law.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Employment Process

The office of human resources oversees the process of employment of individuals to ensure continued delivery of services to students as well as to employees of Somerset County Public Schools. The process is well defined for each type of employee. The process usually includes posting and advertising of vacancies. The office of human resources provides an annual New Teacher Orientation Program and an orientation session for substitute teachers and other employees. The office of transportation and the office of food services provide orientation for new employees in their respective areas.

Employee Categories

Unit I - (TASCO) - includes teachers, specialists, and the administrative and supervisory staff.

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES
Budget Manager
Nurse Manager
Nurse II
Maintenance Foreman Network Administrator Head Food Service Manager
Nurse I
Maintenance Technician PC Technician
Accounting Associate Executive Associate
Administrative Office Associate II Human Resources Associate Data Specialist Associate School Administrative Associate Mechanic Specialist
Administrative Office Associate I School Administrative Associate I Head Custodian II
Office Associate School Office Associate Head Custodian I
Instructional Assistant Alternative to Suspension Monitors Alternative Learning Center Assistant High School Student Resource Assistant Technology Assistant
Custodian

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Job Descriptions

Job or position description is a statement of major tasks which are typical of the scope and complexity of the work.

The maintenance of adequate position descriptions to ensure sound classification is a mutual responsibility shared by non-supervisory employees, supervisors, and the office of human resources. The responsibility of each is generally described as follows:

1. The employee is responsible for bringing to the attention of the supervisor or the office of human resources any continuing differences between work assignments and the job description, which substantially affect the accuracy of the official description of duties for the position.
2. The supervisor is responsible for making job assignments, for seeing that they are properly described and made known to the office of human resources, for informing the employee of the duties of the position, and for promptly reporting any substantial change to the office of human resources.
3. The office of human resources is responsible for establishing procedures and lines of communication to ensure that changes are promptly reported and that required action is taken to correct classification errors and misassignments.

Recruitment and Staffing

Somerset County Public Schools actively recruits teachers and administrators in an ongoing process. During the school year, recruiters visit college campuses in Maryland and elsewhere to meet prospective applicants, conduct interviews, and distribute and receive applications.

Other recruiting strategies include advertising, early interviews, on-line services, incentives, college contacts, private sector contacts, mentor programs, etc.

Criminal Background Checks and Fingerprinting

All new employees and individuals who regularly work with students of the Somerset County Public School System are required to undergo a background investigation conducted through County, State, Federal, and agencies to determine employment eligibility.

The background investigation process requires that each employee complete a disclosure statement and be fingerprinted before beginning employment. The background investigation will consist of checks of public court records, Somerset County Department of Social Services, the State of Maryland Criminal Justice Information System, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation for verification of all disclosure statement information.

All processing of these checks is done on an appointment basis only and can be arranged by calling 410-621-6249. A processing fee of \$42.00 is required to be paid by the employee.

Any falsification in the application process which is subsequently discovered shall be grounds for dismissal.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Teacher Certification

All teachers and administrators in the state of Maryland are required to hold a certificate issued by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Certificates are issued on the basis of preparation and not assignment, except in areas of administration and guidance where graduate credit is required. Endorsements may be added in other areas for which the teacher qualifies whether or not the teacher is assigned to the areas involved.

Maryland certification bylaw provides a number of options for earning certification. Successful completion of the National Teachers Exam and or PRAXIS Exams are a basic part of certification requirements for teaching certificates.

MSDE currently charges a \$10 fee for the issuance of all certificates.

Classified Probationary Procedure

Initial Evaluation

All newly hired classified employees will be evaluated initially at the end of a six (6) month probationary period. During this period, the employee may be terminated without right of appeal.

If an employee is rated unsatisfactory in one or more areas during the initial evaluation, the probationary period may be extended for an additional three months upon recommendation of the evaluator. If a second probationary period is granted by the superintendent and the evaluation is considered unsatisfactory at the end of this period, the employee shall be recommended for termination. The employee does not have the right of appeal during this process.

Performance Evaluation

One of the most important processes affecting employees is the performance evaluation. Throughout the year, ongoing discussions between supervisors and employees provide an excellent opportunity to assess the work situation and to define future goals, a plan of implementation, and training needs. Each employee is evaluated according to a schedule and all evaluations become part of the employee's personnel file. Employees will receive a copy of all such evaluations.

Classified Evaluation

Each group will be evaluated by an instrument related to its specific area of responsibility.

All employees will have a minimum of one (1) evaluation per year. A copy of the written evaluation will be given to the employee.

If the evaluation is unsatisfactory, the employee will be placed on probation for 3 months with no increase in salary or recommended for dismissal.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Teacher Evaluation

The process is explained in the Teachers Observation and Evaluation Materials booklet. The following implementation guidelines outlines the process.

1. Non-Tenured Teachers
 - ▶ By January 30th
 - 2 Written Observations
 - 1st Formal Evaluation①

 - ▶ By February 15th
 - Letter notifying the superintendent of any teacher who may not be recommended for contract renewal

 - ▶ By April 1st
 - 2 subsequent Written Observations
 - 2nd Formal Evaluation

 - ▶ By April 1st
 - Letter to the superintendent for any non-tenured employee who will not be recommended for contract renewal. Evaluation form should be attached. ②

 - ▶ By May 1st
 - Letter from the superintendent advising teacher of Board of Education action regarding principal's recommendation.

2. Tenured Teachers
 - ▶ First Semester
 - 1 Written Observation
 - ▶ Second Semester
 - 1 Written Observation
 - ▶ By Last Day for Teachers
 - 1 Formal Evaluation ①

3. Process for Second Classing (Tenured Teachers)
 - ▶ By January 30th
 - 2 or more Written Observations by 2 or more observers

 - ▶ By February 15th
 - A letter to the superintendent advising of unsatisfactory progress and an impending recommendation for second class recommendation.

 - ▶ By June 1st
 - 2 subsequent or more Written Observations by 2 or more observers
 - 2nd Formal Evaluation

 - Letter to the superintendent for any teacher who is recommended to be placed on Second

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Class Certificate. Evaluation form should be attached.

②

- ▶ By Last Day for Teachers Letter from the superintendent advising teacher of Board of Education action regarding the principal's recommendation.

- ▶ A teacher who is placed on second class certificate will remain in the same teaching assignment for the following year.

- ▶ Observation criteria to determine placement on Second Class Certificate as delineated in the Annotated Code of Maryland, section 6-102 are:
 - Scholarship
 - Executive Ability
 - Personality
 - Teaching Efficiency

4. Process for evaluation a Teacher on Second Class Certificate

- ▶ By January 30th 2 or more Written Observations by 2 or more
observers
1st Formal Evaluation

- ▶ By February 15th A letter to the superintendent advising of unsatisfactory progress and an impending recommendation for contract non-renewal

- ▶ By April 1st 2 subsequent or more Written Observations by
2 or more observers
2nd Formal Evaluation

- ▶ By April 1st Letter to the superintendent for any employee on second class certificate who will not be recommended for contract renewal. Evaluation form should be attached. ②

- ▶ By May 1st Letter from the superintendent advising teacher of his decision regarding the principal's recommendation.

①All evaluations that are not submitted to the superintendent for action should be sent to the Supervisor of Human Resources.

②The evaluation Form and or letter of recommendation to the superintendent should include the following:

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

- ▶ Clear delineation of concerns in 4 or 5 areas of the teaching performance
- ▶ Steps that have been taken to assist the teacher to improve
- ▶ Documentation that the teacher has been advised about implications of the unsatisfactory evaluation.

Specialist Evaluation

All specialists will receive an annual evaluation. All itinerant staff including school psychologists, occupational therapist, speech and language pathologists, and physical therapists will receive an itinerant evaluation. Guidance counselors and media specialists will receive evaluations specifically designed for their respective areas of responsibility.

Administrative and Supervisory Evaluation

The process and procedures for principals and central office staff are outlined in Board of Education policies 200-6 and 200-7 respectively.

Standard Hours and Work Days

Certified personnel - (classroom teachers)

1. 10 months 7 ½ hours/day (½ hr. lunch) - 188 days/year

Certified personnel - (vice-principals, principals, coordinators, supervisors, asst. superintendent and superintendent)

1. 10 months 8 ½ hours/day (1 hr. lunch) - 188 days/year
2. 10 ½ months 8 ½ hours/day (1 hr. lunch) - 198 days/year
3. 11 months 8 ½ hours/day (1 hr. lunch)- 208 days/year
4. 11 ½ months 8 ½ hours/day (1 hr. lunch)- 218 days/year
5. 12 months 8 ½ hours/day (1 hr. lunch)- 260 days/year

Instructional Assistants

1. 10 months 7 ½ hours/day (½ hr. lunch) - 188 days/year

Secretaries

1. 10 months 8 hours/day (1 hr. lunch) - 220 days/year
2. 10 ½ months 8 hours/day (1 hr. lunch)- 230 days/year
3. 11 months 8 hours/day (1 hr. lunch)- 240 days/year
4. 11 ½ months 8 hours/day (1 hr. lunch)- 250 days/year
5. 12 months 7 hours/day (1 hr. lunch)- 260 days/year

Custodians

1. 10 months 9 hours/day (1 hr. lunch)- 220 days/year

2. 12 months 9 hours/day (1 hr. lunch)- 260 days/year

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Maintenance Employees

1. 12 months 9 hours/day (1 hr. lunch) - 260 days/year

Cafeteria Workers

1. 10 months 6.5 hours/day - 183 days/year

Cafeteria Managers

1. 10 months 7.5 hours/day - 185 days/year

Salary

There are numerous salary scales for Somerset County Public School employees. Salary scales are published in the annual Operating and Capital Budget document and are also available in the Office of Human Resources. Employees who have a question regarding salary should contact the Office of Human Resources at 410 621-6238 or the Office of Administrative Services at 410 621-6227.

Pay Periods

Pay day occurs on the 15th and last day of each month. Teachers may elect to be paid over 12 month (24 pays) or may default to the standard 10 month pay (20 pays). Teachers may elect to change their pay status each June. Temporary and substitute employees are paid two weeks behind their actual work.

Payroll and Benefits Information

The payroll area of the finance office is responsible of paying all employees. At the time of employment, employees are required to fill out forms for direct deposit, federal and state tax withholding, beneficiary and health insurance elections. Employees may submit changes to their tax withholdings at any time. Forms are available at all school locations and the finance office. Any lifestyle changes affecting healthcare benefits (i.e. divorce, birth, etc.) must be submitted by way of a Healthcare Application within 31 days of the event to the finance office.

Overtime

Certain staff members, generally classified personnel, may, from time to time, be asked to work hours beyond their regularly scheduled time. An employee with a question about overtime should first seek the assistance of the immediate supervisor. The pay status may be verified by the finance office at 410-621-6236.

Mileage Reimbursement

All employees are to be reimbursed for use of private vehicles while performing authorized school system business. The rate is set by the Board of Education.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Staff Awards and Recognition

Somerset County Public Schools participate in the Maryland Teacher of the Year program, which annually honors teachers from around the state. The local Teacher of the Year receives monetary awards and recognition from the school system and area businesses and becomes Somerset County's nominee for the Maryland honor. For information, call the Teacher of the Year Coordinator at 410-621-6238.

Service Awards

Service Awards are presented to staff members at the school system's annual Staff Appreciation Banquet. Employees are recognized for years of service in five year increments.

Transportation (Buses) Safety Awards

Bus contractors are recognized for years of safe service at the school system's Staff Appreciation Banquet.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Access to Personnel Files

All personnel have an official file that is maintained at the central office and is controlled by the supervisor of human resources.

Access to an employee's official personnel file is limited to the employee, the employee's designated representative, administrative and supervisory personnel, and human resources personnel.

All employees have a right to review their personnel file.

Sick Leave

Ten (10) month employees shall be credited with sick leave at the rate of ten (10) days per year and twelve (12) month employees at the rate of twelve (12) days per year. No medical proof of illness shall be required for use of sick leave unless, by the judgement of the superintendent, there has been a systematic pattern of absences or prolonged illness.

The Board will be responsible for affecting the transfer of all accumulative sick leave for any employee who comes to the Somerset County School System from another county in Maryland.

The Board shall inform each employee during the month of September of the amount of sick leave accumulated. Unused sick leave shall be cumulative without limit.

Employees shall, at their request, be allowed to use sick leave for absence due to disability connected with or resulting from pregnancy. Under this provision such disability shall be treated as a temporary disability, and all Board policies concerning personal illness shall be applicable to such disability. Employees shall return to work six weeks after the birth of the child unless the doctor certifies complications and requests additional sick leave. Upon the termination of such disability, the employee must return to work unless she resigns or requests a leave of absence.

Employees may use accumulated sick leave to care for an ill spouse, child, parent or in-law when the employee is the primary care giver.

Family and Medical Leave Act - Policy #700-33 (Pending Board Approval)

Employees Eligible for Family and Medical Leave Act Benefits (FMLA)

All permanent* employees whose assignment provides for at least 17½ hours per week and who have been employed by the Somerset County Board of Education at least 12 months may request family and/or medical leave.

*The term *permanent* as used in this policy is not intended to create any job status or employment relationship not established by other Board policy(ies).

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Benefits

1. Eligible employees may request up to 12 work weeks of unpaid leave time, which must be used in conjunction with other paid and/or unpaid leave provisions outlined in other personnel policies.
2. The Board of Education will continue to pay its rate of contribution toward health insurance coverage that is in effect at the time the leave commences for eligible employees for a maximum of 12 weeks. The employee, without remaining leave, will make arrangements to pay the employee portion on a monthly basis unless provided for by a negotiated agreement. The employee who has used all FMLA benefits and is on unpaid leave will be responsible for the full cost of benefits beginning on the first day of the unpaid leave. Employees without remaining leave may be considered as employees until the end of the fiscal year. Documentation must be provided by the employee to justify the extended absence during the fiscal year. Only employees with additional sick leave may continue as a staff member into the next fiscal year.
3. Eligible employees may request FMLA benefits once during a 12-month period, which is defined as that period between September 1 and August 31.

Conditions For Which Family and/or Medical Leave May Be Granted

1. Birth and subsequent care of a child of an eligible employee.
2. Care of adopted or foster child.
3. Care of eligible employee's spouse, child or parent who has a serious health problem*
4. Serious health problem* which makes the eligible employee unable to perform the essential functions of the assigned position.
*In-patient care or continuing treatment by a health care provider.

Note: Entitlement to family leave expires twelve (12) months after the birth or adoption of a child. Additionally, such leave cannot be taken intermittently.

Procedures For Applying for Family and/or Medical Leave

1. Submit application for **Family or Medical Leave** thirty (30) days prior to the anticipated beginning of leave.
2. Submit **Medical Certification Statement for Employee's Own Serious Illness or Medical Certification Statement of Illness of Employee's Family Member** five days to the requested absence.
3. Submit **Notice of Intention to Return From Leave** form five days prior to the request for extended absence if illness documented in D-2 will extend the leave requested.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Note: All forms described must be submitted to the supervisor of human resources.

Other Provisions of FMLA

1. The husband and wife are entitled to a total of twelve (12) weeks for the birth of a child; placement of a child for adoption or foster care; or to care for a parent with a serious health condition. For their own, their spouse's or their child's serious health condition, they are each entitled to twelve (12) weeks, or the difference between the 12 weeks and the time already used individually (for a reason listed in the previous paragraph). If, for example, both employees have already used six weeks each to care for a newborn child, and then one spouse develops a serious health condition, they would be entitled to six more weeks of leave each.
2. Employees who choose not to return to work at the conclusion of the approved 12-week period will be required to repay the Board's portion of the health insurance premium for the unpaid portion of the leave.
3. Medical leave (see C. 3 and 4) may be taken intermittently.
4. Failure to return to work at the end of the leave period may be treated as a resignation unless an extension has been agreed upon and approved in writing by the Somerset County Board of Education.
5. Every attempt will be made to restore an employee returning from leave to his or her original position. If the employee's original position is unavailable, the employee will be placed in an equivalent position with equivalent pay and benefits.

Maternity Leave

Employees shall, at their request, be allowed to use sick leave for absence due to disability connected with/or resulting from pregnancy. Under this provision such disability shall be treated as a temporary disability, and all Board policies concerning personal illness shall be applicable to such disability. Employees shall return to work six weeks after the birth of the child unless the doctor certifies complications and requests additional sick leave. Upon the termination of such disability, the employee must return to work unless she resigns or requests a leave of absence. Employees adhere to the following process.

- ▶ Write a letter to the supervisor of human resources requesting maternity leave.
- ▶ Fill out form #46 (**Application To Be Placed on a Qualifying Approved Leave of Absence**). Contact the human resources associate for the correct form at 410-621-6249.
- ▶ If you have insurance with the school system, contact the accounting associate, concerning your insurance coverage at 410-621-6235.

Parental Leave

Tenured staff members shall, at their request, be granted a leave of absence, without pay, for childbearing and or child rearing for such period of time as they specify, but not to exceed one (1) year.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Employees returning from parental leave shall be assigned to their former position or its equivalent and shall have assignment preference over new incoming employees. The employee on leave shall be afforded the opportunity to continue payments toward retirement and or insurance programs.

Temporary Leaves of Absence

Bereavement Leave

Each employee is entitled to five (5) work days of leave immediately following the death of a blood relative, parental in-law, or a family member of the immediate household. This leave shall commence beginning the first full day after the death of a direct blood relative, parental in-law, or a family member of the immediate household. If an employee is notified of death as identified above during a working day, this day shall not count as part of the provision. Two additional days may be requested from the superintendent for a death outside the immediate area and requiring travel.

Business Leave

Employees shall be entitled to three (3) days of business leave per year without loss of pay to fulfill pressing business or legal obligations or emergency family matters which cannot, through the exercise or reasonable diligence, be scheduled outside school hours. Requests for business leave must be submitted in writing to the director of administrative services at least seventy-two (72) hours before the leave is to be taken.

Serious Illness of Blood Relative or Member of Immediate Household

Each member is entitled to three (3) days of leave per year for serious illness of a blood relative or member of the family living in the immediate household.

Visiting Other Schools and Attending Conferences

Absences from school may be granted for the purpose of visiting other schools or attending meetings or conferences of an educational nature with pay. Such leave shall be initiated by the superintendent.

Teachers' Association of Somerset County Leave

Time necessary for duly authorized representatives of the Teachers' Association of Somerset County to attend meetings and conferences of state and national education associations shall be granted with pay, when such absence is approved by the superintendent.

Court Summons or Jury Duty

An employee may be absent without loss of pay for court summons or any legal proceedings if he is required by law to attend. However, in the case of jury duty, a teacher will receive his regular salary minus a deduction equal the amount of pay he receives for said duty.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Sabbatical Leave

The Board and the Association recognize that professional improvement is important and a professional responsibility of the teacher under contract. The Board rewards this advancement with pay and discourages teachers from requesting leave at the end of the school year to attend early summer school sessions. The superintendent shall be receptive to requests that are exceptional in nature. Such requests must be made in writing before May. If leave is granted, it may be with full loss of pay. Business leave may be used by teachers when the opening of a college summer session precedes the last duty day for teachers. This leave shall not interfere unduly with the program of instruction and shall be subject to approval by the superintendent.

Extended Leaves of Absence

1. The Board shall normally grant leaves of absence to tenured teachers of Somerset County without pay but will extend full experience credit for:
 - (a) Military Service (all employees)
 - (b) Peace Corps (all employees)
 - (c) VISTA (all employees
 - (d) Association activities (local, state, or national)
 - (e) Further study for professional improvement (Defined as a full-time student (as defined by the institution) for the entire time the leave is granted or involved in a recognized internship program.)
2. The Board shall normally grant leaves of absence to employees without pay and without experience credit for:
 - (a) Campaigning for or serving in a public office (all employees)
 - (b) Teaching in an accredited college or university
3. Leaves granted in Item 1 above shall be for a maximum of three (3) years. Leaves in Item 2 above shall be for a maximum of one (1) calendar year.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Absenteeism

An employee must notify the immediate supervisor of an impending absence. Notice of absence due to illness is expected at least one hour prior to the time an employee is to report for duty. Under normal conditions, notice of absence for personal business or annual leave must be submitted at least 72 hours in advance for approval. Employees are expected to report to work on a regular basis. Patterns of poor attendance are unacceptable unless justified by reasonable cause.

Transfer

The transfer of an employee may be considered voluntary, involuntary, or administrative. The provisions governing the transfer of an employee are found in the negotiated agreement and Board policy under which the position is classified.

Reduction in Force

A reduction in staff may occur for such reasons as insufficient student enrollment to warrant the current staff, program elimination, and cuts in funding. Procedural details are contained within the Unit I Negotiated Agreement.

Resignation

Employees are encouraged to advise the immediate supervisor and the supervisor of human resources of a planned resignation as early as possible. Employees under contract (Unit I) are required to honor contractual obligations. Classified employees are expected to give no less than two weeks notice.

Termination

Under various circumstances, it may be deemed appropriate to terminate the employment of a Somerset County Public Schools employee.

1. The superintendent or designee may terminate, with cause, the employment of any non-probationary/tenured classified employee, pursuant to the superintendent's authority under the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.
2. On the recommendation of the superintendent, the Board of Education may suspend or dismiss a teacher, principal, supervisor, assistant superintendent or other professional staff (Annotated Code of Maryland 6-202).
3. The employment of an individual, who does not return from a leave of absence at the prescribed time, may be terminated.
4. The employment of a non-tenured teacher or a teacher with a one-year provisional contract is subject to automatic termination on June 30 of each year.
5. The employment of an individual working in a per diem capacity, such as a substitute teacher, consultant, interpreter, etc., is subject to termination in order to meet the needs of the school system

In all situations, employees are entitled to due process under the law.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Grievance Procedure - Teachers' Association of Somerset County (TASCO)

Section I. Definitions

A "grievant" shall mean an employee or group of employees or the Association filing a grievance.

A "grievance" shall mean a written statement by a grievant that a controversy, dispute or disagreement of any kind or character exists arising out of or in any way involving interpretation or application of the terms of this Agreement.

"Employer" shall mean the Board of Education or its administration. "Days" shall mean working days.

Section II. Procedure and Steps

With twenty (20) days following knowledge of the act or condition which is the basis of the complaint, the grievant may file a grievance with the school principal or his designated representative.

Step 1. The school principal or his designated representative shall have five (5) days to give a written decision after receipt of the grievance.

Step 2. If the grievance is not settled in Step 1, the grievant may move it to Step 2 by written notice to the superintendent. The superintendent or his designated representative shall have ten (10) days to give a written decision after receipt of the grievance.

Step 3. The decision in Step 2 may be appealed to the Board by notice in writing. The Board will hear the grievance and render a decision within twenty (20) days following receipt of the appeal.

Step 4. If the grievance is not settled in Step 3, the Association may move the matter to an arbitration panel. This panel is to be composed of three (3) Somerset County residents, one of whom must be a practicing attorney. The panel shall be constituted in the following manner:

1. The Somerset County Bar Association shall name its member who shall be chairman.
2. The other two (2) members shall be secured from lists of names of four (4) people who are willing to serve and who are not directly associated with the grievance. The parties shall exchange suggested names and select a name from each other's list.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Step 4. A majority decision of this panel shall be final and binding on the parties. The expenses incurred by this panel shall be borne equally by both parties.

Section III. Association Representation

All employees shall have the right of Association representation at each step of the grievance procedure and shall be required to be present at each step. Any individual employee or group of employees shall have the right at any time to present grievances to their employer and to have such grievances adjusted, without the intervention of the Association as long as the adjustment is not inconsistent with the terms of the Agreement, and the Association has been given opportunity to be present and make statements at such adjustment. Copies of employer decisions at Step 2 and above shall be speedily delivered to the Association.

Section IV. No Reprisals

No reprisals shall be invoked against any employee for processing a grievance or participating in any way in the grievance procedure.

Section V. Released Time

If required, released time shall be provided for the grievant to be present at each step and the grievant shall accept the designation of time, provided it is during the school day.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Inclement Weather: School Closings and Delayed Openings

Nothing is more important to us than the safety and welfare of our children. To ensure that our young people are safe and secure on a daily basis, parents and school staff must work together.

School Closings

Emergency closings of our schools may be necessitated due to power failures, loss of heat, failure of water or sewer systems, snow, tornadoes, emergency evacuations, etc. When school is closed prior to opening in the morning; all employees will be notified via the school telephone tree as soon as the decision is made to close. Notices will also be broadcast on local television and radio stations.

When an early closing occurs, established procedures must be followed to assure that all students are properly supervised upon dismissal. All early dismissals are based upon the safety and health of the students. When schools are closed, for whatever reason, area radio and television stations are notified approximately one hour prior to dismissal. Please do not call the school; listen to the radio and television.

The superintendent or his/her designee shall determine which, if any, personnel need to remain at the school after the school closing. It is the responsibility of the head custodian to clean sidewalks and entrances of their building of snow or other debris in preparation for the opening of school. Other custodial staff may be brought in to assist in this effort.

Delayed Openings

When school is delayed in opening, employees are to report on time unless instructed by their immediate supervisor, radio and television notice, or the telephone tree.

Early Dismissal

When school is dismissed early, employees will be notified by their immediate supervisor of their dismissal times, if changed from normal hours.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Pay & Banking Information

Direct Deposit

Direct deposit of pays is available to all employees. Pay may be deposited directly into a bank of the employee's choice. Each employee receives a paystub each payday.

Credit Union

Employees are eligible to join the WorCo Federal Credit Union. Employees may remit funds to the Credit Union via payroll deduction, savings account deposit, or via direct deposit. The Credit Union provides savings and Christmas and Vacation Club accounts are available. Loan options include unsecured line of credit, secured loan, new or refinancing of car loan, vacation loan, education loan, home equity line of credit and second mortgages. Loans through the Credit Union may be paid back through payroll deduction. For additional information contact WorCo Credit Union at 410-957-4521.

Savings Account Deductions

Employees may take the opportunity to direct a deduction from their paycheck to a savings account of their choice to any financial institution via direct deposit. It's a convenient way to save and employees are eligible to commence or change their deduction at any time.

United Way Program

Employees may contribute to the United Way Program through payroll deduction. Individuals may change or terminate contributions only during the annual United Way Campaign. Pledge cards and information packets will be available at all locations during the annual campaign.

Leave Benefits

Sick Leave Benefits

TASCO sponsors a sick leave bank for its members. The sick leave bank is maintained to provide additional days for employees who experience a health problem which requires more sick leave than they have accumulated. The bank is maintained through member donation of sick leave days. A committee is established to review requests for usage of days in the bank.

Vacation Benefits

Employees have vacation benefits as designated by Board policy #700-13.

Workers' Compensation

All employees injured in an occupational accident may be entitled to worker's compensation benefits. Benefits include payment of medical bills and wage restoration (partial). Claims are administered by the finance office at 410-621-6235. Employees, upon approval, are entitled to wage continuation benefits for up to sixty (60) lost duty days.

Employees who experience an injury on the job must report the injury to their supervisor or school secretary as soon as possible so that a First Report of Injury may be completed.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Information relating to workers' compensation forms and procedures is contained in the "Workers' Compensation Forms and Procedures Manual," which is available at all facilities.

Questions regarding forms or procedures should be directed to the finance office at 410-621-6235.

Life/Health/Flexible Spending Accounts/ Voluntary Benefits

The school system provides group life insurance and accidental death and dismemberment (ad&d) insurance through Hartford Life Insurance Company based on amounts provided through negotiated agreements and Board policy at no cost to employees.

Health Care Plans

The following school system sponsored health care options are provided to employees (full and part-time employees are eligible to participate): Delmarva Health Plan. Employees participating in the school system's Delmarva Health Plan have prescriptions benefits. In addition, a dental option is provided. BlueCross BlueShield and BlueCross BlueShield Vision Plan are also available. Details of these plans and employee costs are available at the finance office. Employees may enroll within 31 days of hire. Benefit deductions are on a pre-tax basis.

New employees have only the Delmarva Health Plan option.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Retirement Benefits

The services of the director of administrative services are available to employees as they prepare to enter the challenging phase of retirement. The retirement coordinator serves as the liaison between employees and the Maryland State Retirement Agency. The retirement coordinator is available to answer questions and provide assistance in completing and filing retirement forms and can be reached at 410-621-6227.

The Maryland State Retirement Agency's goal is to have an informed membership. Any questions may also be directed to the agency's counseling staff at 410-767-4030/4040 or toll free in Maryland at 1-800-492-5909.

Additionally, consultation is provided through the Maryland State Retirement Agency's Regional Counseling Program. Members who wish to schedule an appointment should call 410-767-4030/4040 or 1-800-492-5909

Supplemental Retirement Plan - 403(b) Annuities and 403(b) 7 Investments

Employees are eligible to participate in 403(b) or 403(b)7 plan at any time during their employment. The program is administered in accordance with IRS provisions - currently employees may save up to \$10,000 per calendar year or 20% of their prior year's income (subject to certain criteria) on a pre-tax basis. Employees are responsible to contact the vendor to initiate payroll deduction. Employees may elect to have deductions through more than one participating vendor.

Tuition Reimbursement

Employees may be eligible for tuition reimbursement for courses taken toward certification requirements. If state or local mandates require specific course work or training, tuition reimbursement will be provided. For information pertaining to your specific circumstances, call the office of human resources at 410-621-6249.

Volunteer Sick Leave Bank

All members of the bargaining unit on active duty in Somerset County are eligible to contribute on a voluntary basis to a sick leave bank. Contributors will be permitted to apply for leave from the bank to cover regularly scheduled duty days for periods of personal illness, injury or quarantine which is not only prolonged but is also catastrophic and incapacitating and which is not likely to permanently disable the teacher.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Be Health Conscious in the Workplace

To avoid serious health problems in the work environment, all employees are to be extremely cautious and careful when dealing with blood and other body fluids. Exposure to Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) or the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) occurs through direct contact with infected blood or other body fluids in one or more of the following ways:

1. Being stuck with infected needles or other sharp objects.
2. Having infected blood or other body fluids splashed
 - (a) in the mouth, eyes, or nose
 - (b) onto skin that is cut, scratched, or has sores, rashes, or other skin conditions
3. Being bitten (saliva) by a human carrying HBV may be infectious

Universal Precautions

In an emergency, when body fluids cannot be identified or if uncertain whether or not they contain blood, treat the fluids as potentially infectious.

Use Personal Protective Equipment

It is especially important to use latex or vinyl gloves for any task involving exposure to blood and other body fluids. Be sure the gloves have no holes, cracks or tears.

Follow Correct Work Practices

1. Precautionary measures
 - (a) Cover all cuts and scratches on your skin before going to work.
2. Hand washing
 - (a) Hand washing is the best overall protection against most communicable diseases.
 - (b) Wash your hands and other skin surfaces thoroughly with soap and running water immediately after contact with blood or other body fluids.
 - (c) When running water is not available, waterless handwash substitute should be used.
3. Needles and sharps disposal
 - (a) Do not recap, bend, or break needles or manipulate them by hand in any way.
 - (b) Place all needles and other sharp objects in red puncture-resistant containers.
 - (c) Place these containers as close as possible to the area where sharp objects are used.
4. Cleaning up blood spills
 - (a) Always wear gloves. Wear eye and face protection if splashes could occur.
 - (b) Soak up spills with disposable towels. Saturate with a CDC approved germ killer (available at all schools).
 - (c) Wipe area with clean towels and let air-dry.
 - (d) Place all infected items for disposal in a disposal trash can liner. Remove gloves last and wash hands.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

5. Cleaning your clothes
 - (a) Wear gloves; handle soiled items as little as possible.
 - (b) Carry clothing in bags or in other containers that do not leak.
 - (c) Place all items in a second bag if the first bag gets torn or has blood or other body fluids on it.
 - (d) Wash and dry uniforms according to directions on the label.

6. Equipment disposal
 - (a) Dispose of protective equipment and or disinfect immediately after use, following universal precautions.
 - (b) Use an area specifically set aside for cleaning and disinfecting emergency equipment at your workplace.

Use of School Property, Equipment or Materials

No employee shall be permitted the use of public school property, equipment or materials for personal use outside his or her direct responsibilities and assignment as an employee of the Board of Education of Somerset County without authorization from the immediate supervisor.

Unauthorized use of school property, equipment or materials may be considered grounds for dismissal.

Courtesy in the Workplace

Appropriate and professional dress sends a positive message to students, parents, and members of the community. Educators should remember that they are role models for students and representatives of the public school system.

Proper and respectful language is to be used in the workplace at all times. Everyday conduct should convey messages of respect, honesty, courtesy, kindness, and consideration. Likewise, employee behavior should reflect a commitment to positive human relations which calls for individuals to “speak to each other, listen to each other, hear each other, value each other’s right to form opinions, and respect each other regardless of disability or socioeconomic background.”

Keep Us Up-to-Date

For the school system to fully serve the needs of parents, students, and others, it is essential to communicate effectively as employees. Pertinent information should be shared with fellow employees so that we may all work together more efficiently and effectively.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Punctuality

Arriving on time for your assigned duties is important to your colleagues, the parents, the students, and the community. The school system has an obligation to provide appropriate supervision for health and safety reasons. Being at your assigned duty location is essential to ensure the safety of all affected persons. Staying at your duty station until the assigned ending time is also essential.

Exceptional situations that arise may be resolved by consulting the immediate supervisor.

Respect Confidential Information

As employees of the school system, it is imperative that you familiarize yourself with your privacy rights and the privacy rights of students.

The privacy of student education records is safeguarded by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which prohibits the release of personally identifiable information without the written consent of the parent or eligible student. Access to student education records by persons other than the student and parents is granted only for legitimate and recognized educational purposes.

The office of human resources is responsible for keeping a current folder on each school system employee. The folder contains a record of all pertinent pre-employment information, including the application, references, verification of previous employment and education, a record of any change in status, position, or salary of the employee, evaluation and ratings, and other information required by law or Board policy. All employees or designees authorized by employees, have the right to review all items in their personnel file, except confidential references pertaining to original employment or promotion. Administrative and supervisory personnel and the clerical staff of the office where the files are located are the only personnel allowed access to personnel files.

Restrict Personal Phone Calls

During the duty day, all employees should restrict their personal use of school system telephones for situations that are either emergencies or cannot be postponed until the close of business. Employees are not to engage in activity pertaining to other jobs or businesses. Supervisors are directed to observe phone call patterns and to take appropriate corrective action should any employee abuse the privilege of using school system telephone equipment.

Safety

Typically, occupational injuries occur as a result of an unsafe act and or an unsafe condition and can be avoided by diligent attention to safe work practices. Safety has been and will continue to be every employee's responsibility. It is the policy of Somerset County Public Schools to present a safe environment for students, visitors, and employees.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

School Security

Listed below are some areas which are to be in place when maximizing the security of each facility:

1. All entrance and exit doors not in use should be secured once the children have arrived. Staff should make door checks during school hours to ensure that doors are not propped open.
2. Custodial staff should secure all receiving doors.
3. Visitors' entrances should be clearly posted with signs indicating that visitors must report to the administrative office.
4. All staff should question "strangers" in the building as to the purpose of the visit. All visitors should be required to sign in and out to provide a record of who has been in the building and the length of time of the visit.
5. The custodial staff should trim, thin or remove any underbrush or bushes which are immediately adjacent to the school entrance ways.
6. Exterior lighting should be checked to ensure that it is operational. Make sure outside lighting times are set properly to reflect time changes and evening activities.
7. Periodic testing of the public address system should be done to ensure that it is operable especially in its capacity to allow communications between classrooms and the main office.
8. If available, a compact transmitting and receiving set (walkie-talkie) or cellular telephones should be provided to the staff monitoring recess or lunch.
9. Principals or building supervisors should consider asking the local police to tour their facility and make suggestions to help improve security. On request, such services are provided as police department resources allow.

If you have specific questions, please contact the director of administrative services at 410-621-6227, who will attempt to assist you in satisfying your concerns and or needs in this area.

Work Quality

Citizens, taxpayers, parents, and students of Somerset County have the right to expect the greatest effort and highest quality work of each employee of the Somerset County Public Schools. Our goal must be excellence in all work performed.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Policy# 700-27 - Disciplinary Procedures for Classified Employees

- A. Somerset County Public Schools will strive to assist classified employees meet or exceed the expectations of positions and to perform their duties satisfactorily. Every effort will be made to avoid dismissing personnel at any level.
- B. The Board of Education directs the Superintendent of Schools to develop and implement regulations for the discipline of classified employees. Such regulations will provide for progressive penalties where appropriate, including warnings and written letters of reprimand, suspension, or dismissal of permanent employees. In some circumstances, because of the seriousness of the employee's conduct or behavior, action may be taken without following progressive penalties cited above. Permanent employees may be suspended or dismissed from positions for cause, including any of the following:
- See Administrative Procedures**
- (1) Immorality
 - (2) Misconduct in Office (including knowingly failing to report suspected child abuse in violation of §5-701 of the Family Law Article)
 - (3) Insubordination
 - (4) Incompetency
 - (5) Willful Neglect of Duty.

After completion of the probationary period, employees may be discharged, disciplined, reprimanded, or demoted only for cause.

- C. Somerset County Public Schools assures the protection of due process of law in the following way: Recommendations for suspensions or discharge will be made to the superintendent. The individual against whom the action is being considered must be notified in writing, given the reasons for the action under consideration, and afforded an opportunity for a conference with the superintendent prior to any final decision on the recommendations. Acceptable documentation of performance evaluations must include records of conferences and a recommendation for action with justification. After an opportunity for a conference has been provided, the assistant superintendent will act on the recommendation and notify the employee in writing of the suspension or discharge action and of his or her right to appeal the decision.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

SUSPENSION AND DISMISSAL OF CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES

1. Reasons for Imposing Discipline

A. Immorality: An act or course of conduct or behavior that offends the morals of the community and is not in keeping with the standards of behavior of the school environment.

(1) Somerset County Public Schools considers the following as examples of immoral conduct.

The list does not include all types of prohibited conduct, but is intended to suggest the types of conduct that will not be condoned:

- (a) An act not in keeping with the moral standards of the community.
- (b) Abusive and/or vulgar language on the job.
- (c) Inducing students to participate in/or commit an act or acts of immorality.
- (d) Possession, use, distribution, or being under the influence of controlled or dangerous substances.
- (e) Theft of school property or the property of others.
- (f) Falsification of any school record or employment application.
- (g) Possession or distribution of lewd, obscene, or pornographic materials.

(2) Discipline - Any form of discipline may be imposed depending upon circumstances and the specific conduct involved.

B. Misconduct in Office: A transgression of a rule, regulation, or reasonable standard of conduct.

(1) Somerset County Public Schools considers the following as examples of misconduct in office. The list does not include all types of prohibited conduct, but is intended to suggest the types of conduct that will not be condoned:

- (a) Possession, use, distribution, or under the influence of alcoholic beverages on school grounds.
- (b) Knowingly failing to report suspected cases of child abuse. (§5-701 of Family Law Article)
- (c) Harassment and/or intimidation of students, staff or citizens at large including use of racial slurs and/or derogatory remarks.
- (d) Misuse of Somerset County Public School System's property.
- (e) Misrepresentation regarding employee's benefits, privileges and other rules and regulations.
- (f) Disclosing confidential information to unauthorized persons.
- (g) Dating students or engaging in similar inappropriate conduct.
- (h) Misuse of school funds.
- (i) Disorderly conduct on school property or while on duty to include: fighting, threatening, or attempting to inflict bodily harm on another person.
- (j) Possession of firearms or other weapons on school property.
- (k) Knowingly presenting false information of a material fact to the Board of Education.
- (l) The sale or use of tobacco in any form is prohibited in school buildings at all times. In addition, the sale or use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on school grounds during the official school day.

(2) Discipline - Any form of discipline may be imposed depending upon the circumstances and the specific conduct involved

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C. Insubordination: Disobedience to lawful authority.

- (1) Somerset County Public Schools considers the following as examples of insubordination.
The list does not include all types of prohibited conduct, but is intended to suggest the types of conduct that will not be condoned:
 - (a) Failure to perform all work or duties assigned by an administrator in charge.
 - (b) Failure to follow the written or verbal instruction of a supervisor.
- (2) Discipline - Any form of discipline may be imposed depending upon the circumstances and the specific conduct involved.

D. Incompetency: Failure to meet acceptable standards of performance.

- (1) Somerset County Public Schools considers the following as examples of incompetency. The list does not include all types of conduct that will not be condoned.
 - (a) Failure to do work thoroughly and completely.
 - (b) Failure to finish assigned work.
- (2) Discipline - Any form of discipline may be imposed depending upon the circumstances and the specific conduct involved.

E. Willful Neglect of Duty: Failure to follow Public School Law, Code of Maryland Regulations, policies and regulations of the district, directives or job requirements of the school administration.

- (1) Somerset County Public Schools considers the following as examples of willful neglect of duty. The list does not include all types of prohibited conduct but is intended to suggest the types of conduct that will not be condoned:
 - (a) Excessive absence.
 - (b) Excessive tardiness.
 - (c) Unauthorized absence or misuse of leave.
 - (d) Failure to perform specific contracted services agreed upon through written agreements.
2. Discipline - Any form of discipline may be imposed depending upon the circumstances and the specific conduct involved.

II. Forms of Discipline

A. Oral Warning

- (1) This is an oral statement to an employee indicating, but not necessarily limited to, specific conduct.
- (2) May be issued by an immediate supervisor or administrator.

B. Written Warning

- (1) This is a written statement to the employee indicating conduct which is in violation of a rule, regulation, or other requirements; the approximate time(s) of such violation's occurrence; whether the warning is a progressive warning after an oral warning-, a clear and complete description of the deficiency or inadequacy of the employee; and suggestions for assistance,, or a plan of action, and a time line for improvement.
- (2) May be issued by an immediate supervisor or administrator.

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C. Letter of Reprimand

- (1) This is a written statement which specifies that a specific action, behavior, or conduct has transpired; includes a statement that specifies that the letter is a reprimand, and provides for further action should correction not be taken.
- (2) The letter may be issued by an immediate supervisor or administrator and should be signed and dated by the employee.
- (3) A copy should be sent to the Human Resources Office with a notation that a copy will be placed in the employee's personnel file.

D. Disciplinary Suspension, Administrative Leave, or Dismissal

- (1) Suspension: The temporary disciplinary removal of an employee from an assignment.
 - (a) Suspension may be recommended by the immediate supervisor or administrator to the Superintendent of Schools.
 - (b) Suspension is to be preceded by notice, and provisions for an informal opportunity to be heard by the superintendent except where immediate action is required because the employee's presence poses a continuing threat of disrupting the educational process.
 - (c) The superintendent's decision to suspend is subject to appeal to the county Board of Education if taken in writing within ten (10) calendar days.
 - (d) Classified personnel may appeal decision to the county Board of Education in accordance with §4-205 of The Annotated Code of Maryland.
- (2) Administrative Leave: The temporary removal of an employee from an assignment, with or without pay, while an administrative investigation is being conducted which has resulted from charges or allegations against the employee.
 - (a) During an investigation conducted under the auspices of the Human Resources Office, the superintendent may place a classified employee on administrative leave, with or without pay, pending action on the charges or allegations.
 - (b) Placement of an employee on administrative leave is to be preceded by notice to the employee and an informal opportunity to be heard.
 - (c) Should the superintendent or county Board of Education decide in favor of the individual, in cases where leave without pay has been enforced, the restoration of salary and position shall become effective immediately.
- (3) Dismissal: To discharge from employment. Dismissal may be recommended by the principal or site supervisor, or in the case of an administrative investigation, by the Supervisor of Human Resources.

III. Guidelines and Procedures for Administering Discipline Policy

- A.** The specific form of discipline chosen in an individual case will be solely at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools or a designee. However, every attempt will be made to follow the progressive forms of discipline where appropriate.
- B.** The determination of the competency of a classified employee should be documented.
- C.** Should any condition prevail indicating a deficiency on the part of an individual, an informal or formal conference should be noted and the individual should be given direction for improvement. A written summary with directions for improvement will be provided to the individual.

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- D. The employee must be given an opportunity to correct deficiencies.
- E. The removal of any correspondence from a personnel folder resulting from disciplinary action shall be done only with the permission of all parties involved in the action.
- F. The employee's personnel file shall be the repository of all official records used in the disciplinary proceeding. The employee shall have access to, and a copy of, all such records.

IV. Procedures for Hearings and Appeals (Classified Employees)

- A. When an employee has been recommended to be suspended or dismissed, the superintendent of schools is to notify the employee in writing of the charges against him/her and provide the individual the opportunity within ten (10) calendar days of the date of the letter to request a hearing.
- B. Upon written receipt of a request for a hearing with the superintendent, the superintendent shall schedule a formal hearing.
 - (1) The employee is to be notified in writing of the location, date, and time of the hearing.
 - (2) The employee may bring counsel or representation to the hearing.
 - (3) The administrator(s), supervisor(s), or representative(s) of the Human Resources Office shall present all documentation, evidence, supportive data, and investigative reports pertaining to the incident.
 - (4) The employee may present information and call witnesses specifically related to the incident which caused the suspension or placement on administrative leave.
 - (5) Within ten (10) calendar days following the hearing, the superintendent is to notify the employee if disciplinary action is to be taken, the nature of the disciplinary action, the effective date(s) of such action, and the appeal process.
 - (6) Should the superintendent rule in favor of the individual in cases where leave or suspension without pay has been enforced, the restoration of salary and position shall become effective immediately.
- C. **Hearing of Appeals**
 - (1) The employee shall have ten (10) calendar days from the date of the letter of disciplinary action to file an appeal with the county Board of Education. This request shall be in writing and specifically cite the reasons for an appeal. Within ten (10) calendar days of the employee's written request, the superintendent will arrange a conference to hear the individual's appeal.
 - (2) The county Board of Education shall hear an appeal and render a written decision in the case within twenty (20) calendar days of the appeal.

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Policy# 700-28 - Disciplinary Procedures for Professionals

- A.** Somerset County Public Schools will strive to assist professional staff in every way possible to adjust to their positions and to perform their duties satisfactorily. Every reasonable effort will be made to avoid the necessity of dismissing personnel at any level.
- B.** In accordance with state laws and regulations, the Board of Education may dismiss any teacher upon recommendation by the superintendent.
- C.** The Board directs the superintendent to develop and implement regulations for the discipline of professional employees. Such regulations will provide progressive penalties including, where appropriate, verbal warnings, written warnings, letters of reprimand, and suspension or dismissal of tenured employees. In some circumstances, however, because of the seriousness of the employee's conduct or behavior, this action may be taken without following progressive penalties cited above.
- D.** Employees may be suspended or dismissed for any of the following reasons:
- (1) Immorality
 - (2) Misconduct in Office (including knowingly failing to report suspected child abuse in violation of §5-701 of the Family Law Article)
 - (3) Insubordination
 - (4) Incompetency
 - (5) Willful Neglect of Duty
- E.** The superintendent may suspend and or recommend dismissal of a professional employee pending final action by the Board on a recommendation for a longer suspension or for dismissal.
- F. Reasons for Imposing Discipline**
- (1) Immorality: An act or course of conduct or behavior that offends the morals of the community and is not in keeping with the standards of behavior to the school environment.
 - (2) The Somerset County Public Schools considers the following as examples of immoral conduct. The list does not include all types of prohibited conduct, but is intended to suggest the types of conduct that will not be condoned:
 - (a) An act not in keeping with the moral standards of the community.
 - (b) Abusive and or vulgar language on the job.
 - (c) Inducing students to participate in, or commit an act or acts of immorality.
 - (d) Possession, use, distribution, or being under the influence of controlled or dangerous substances.
 - (e) Theft of school property or the property of others. Falsification of any school record or employment application.
 - (f) Possession or distribution of lewd, obscene, or pornographic materials.
 - (3) Discipline - Any form of discipline may be imposed depending upon circumstances and the specific conduct involved.

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G. Misconduct in Office - A transgression of a rule, regulation, or reasonable standard of conduct.

(1) The Somerset County Public Schools considers the following as examples of misconduct in office. The list does not include all types of prohibited conduct, but is intended to suggest the types of conduct that will not be condoned:

- (a) Possession, use, distribution, or under the influence of alcoholic beverages on school grounds.
- (b) Knowingly failing to report suspected cases of child abuse. (§5-701 of Family Law Article)
- (c) Harassment and or intimidation of students, staff or citizens at large including use of racial slurs and or derogatory remarks.
- (d) Misuse of school property.
- (e) Misrepresentation regarding employee's benefits, privileges and other rules and regulations.
- (f) Disclosing confidential information to unauthorized persons.
- (g) Dating students or engaging in similar inappropriate conduct.
- (h) Misuse of school funds.
- (i) Disorderly conduct on school property or while on duty to include: fighting, threatening, or attempting to inflict bodily harm on another person.
- (j) Possession of firearms or other weapons on school property.
- (k) Knowingly presenting false information of a material fact to the Board of Education.
- (l) The sale or use of tobacco in any form is prohibited in school buildings at all times.

In addition, the sale or use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on school grounds during the official school day.

(2) Discipline - Any form of discipline may be imposed depending upon the circumstances and the specific conduct involved

H. Insubordination: Disobedience to lawful authority.

(1) The Somerset County Public Schools considers the following as examples of insubordination. The list does not include all types of prohibited conduct, but is intended to suggest the types of conduct that will not be condoned:

- (a) Failure to perform all work or duties assigned by an administrator in charge.
- (b) Failure to follow the written or verbal instruction of a supervisor.

(2) Discipline - Any form of discipline may be imposed depending upon the circumstances and the specific conduct involved.

I. Incompetency: Failure to meet acceptable standards of performance.

(1) The Somerset County Public Schools considers the following as examples of incompetency.

The list does not include all types of conduct that will not be condoned:

- (a) Demonstrating a lack of basic skills.

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- (b) Failing to provide adequate student control
 - (c) Failing to demonstrate adequate planning or preparation.
 - (d) Demonstrating an inability to communicate (written or oral) effectively.
- (2) Determination of incompetency shall be determined in the following manner:
- (a) The determination of the competency of a professional employee shall be documented over a period of time through assessment and observation.
 - (b) Should any condition prevail indicating deficiency on the part of an individual, informal or formal conferences shall be held. During such conference deficiencies should be noted and the individual shall be given directions for improvement and assistance. A written summary shall be provided to the employee stating the procedure and methods for improvement. Documentation must include dates of observations and conferences.
 - (c) The employee must be given an opportunity to correct deficiencies. The written notice of deficiencies given the employee must include methods for improvement and by when such improvement must occur.
 - (d) When appropriate other administrative or supervisory assistance may be provided to counsel and assist and or document the employee's performance.
 - (e) The immediate supervisor must periodically reassess the original listing of deficiencies, and must note the failure to improve. These observations and conferences must be documented to include dates, incidents, conferences, and other recommendations and suggestions.
- (3) Discipline - Any form of discipline may be imposed depending upon the circumstances and the specific conduct involved.

J. Willful Neglect of Duty: Failure to follow Public School Law, Code of Maryland Regulations, policies and regulations of the district, directives or job requirements of the school system.

- (1) The Somerset County Public Schools considers the following as examples of willful neglect of duty. The list does not include all types of prohibited conduct but is intended to suggest the types of conduct that will not be condoned:
- (a) Excessive absence.
 - (b) Excessive tardiness.
 - (c) Unauthorized absence or misuse of leave.
 - (d) Failure to follow specified course of studies adopted by the Board of Education.
 - (e) Failure to perform specific contracted services agreed upon through written agreements known as "extra pay for extra duty."
- (2) Discipline - Any form of discipline may be imposed depending upon the circumstances and the specific conduct involved.

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K. Forms of Discipline

- (1) Oral Warning - This is an oral statement to an employee indicating, but not necessarily limited to, specific conduct. A written record of such warning may be kept by the administrator or supervisor. The warning may be issued by an immediate supervisor or administrator.
- (2) Written Warning - This is a written statement to the employee indicating conduct which is in violation of a rule, regulation, or other requirements; the approximate time(s) of such violation's occurrence; whether the warning is a progressive warning after an oral warning; a clear and complete description of the deficiency or inadequacy of the employee; and suggestions for assistance, a plan of action, and a time line for improvement. The warning may be issued by an immediate supervisor or administrator.
- (3) Letter of Reprimand - A written statement which specifies that a specific action, behavior, or conduct has transpired; includes a statement that specifies that the letter is a reprimand, and provides for further action should correction not be taken. The statement should be signed by the employee and dated. The statement may be issued by an immediate supervisor or administrator. A copy should be sent to the human resources office with a notation that a copy will be placed in the employee's personnel file.
- (4) Disciplinary Suspension. Administrative Leave, or Dismissal
 - (a) Suspension
 - The temporary disciplinary removal of an employee from his or her assignment.
 - This action may be recommended by the immediate supervisor or administrator to the superintendent.
 - Suspension is to be preceded by written notice, and provisions for an informal opportunity to be heard by the superintendent except where immediate action is required because the employee's presence poses a continuing threat of disrupting the educational process.
 - The superintendent may suspend certificated personnel for cause but should only do so pending consideration by local Board of Education of dismissal or some longer suspension.
 - The employee will be sent a copy of the charges and given the opportunity to request a Board hearing within ten (10) calendar days. If a hearing is requested within the ten (10) days:
 - ✧ The Board of Education will hear the case and render a decision within twenty (20) calendar days following an appeal.
 - ✧ The individual may appear in person or be represented by counsel and may bring witnesses to the hearing.
 - (b) The superintendent has the right to suspend from active duty an employee against whom formal civil or criminal charges have been filed until a decision is rendered. The employee's salary may or may not continue during such suspension.
 - (c) Tenured professional personnel may appeal county Board suspensions or dismissal decisions to the State Board of Education.

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- (5) Administrative Leave - The temporary removal of an employee, with or without pay, while an administrative investigation is being conducted which has resulted from charges or allegations against the employee.
 - (a) During an investigation conducted under the auspices of the human resources office, the superintendent may place a professional employee on administrative leave, with or without pay, pending final action of the local or State Board of Education.
 - (b) Should the local or State Board decide in favor of the individual, in cases where leave without pay has been enforced, the restoration of salary and position shall become effective immediately.

- (6) Dismissal - To discharge from employment.
 - (a) The recommendation for dismissal of a tenured teacher shall be made to the Board by the superintendent and shall be for cause.
 - (b) The employee will be sent a copy of the charges and given the opportunity to request a Board of Education hearing within ten (10) calendar days. If a hearing is requested within the ten (10) day period:
 - The Board of Education will hear the case and render a decision within twenty (20) calendar days following an appeal.
 - The individual may appear in person or be represented by counsel and may bring witnesses to the hearing.
 - (c) The superintendent shall present a recommendation for dismissal along with all documentation, evidence, and supportive data, including evidence that the employee has been duly notified of the impending dismissal.
 - (d) Tenured professional personnel may appeal the decision of county Board dismissal or action to the State Board of Education.

L. Guidelines and Procedures for Administering Discipline Policy

- (1) The specific form of discipline chosen in an individual case will be solely at the discretion of the superintendent or designee. However, every attempt will be made to follow the progressive forms of discipline where appropriate.
- (2) The removal of any correspondence from a personnel folder shall only be done with the permission of all parties involved.
- (3) The employee's personnel file shall be the repository of all official records used in the disciplinary proceeding. The employee shall have access to, and a copy of, all such records.

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M. Procedures for Hearings and Appeals (Professional Employees)

- (1) When a person is placed on immediate suspension, the superintendent will notify the employee in writing of the charges against them and provide the individual the opportunity to request a conference within ten (10) calendar days of the date of the letter. Should the individual fail to request a conference, or waive this right, the superintendent may implement disciplinary action as warranted, or recommend dismissal or further disciplinary action to the Board of Education.
- (2) Upon written receipt of a request for a conference, the superintendent shall schedule such a conference.
 - (a) The employee is to be notified in writing of the location, date and time.
 - (b) The employee may bring counsel or representation.
 - (c) The administrator(s), supervisor(s), or representatives of the department of human resources shall present all documentation, evidence, supportive data, and investigative reports pertaining to the incident.
 - (d) The employee may present information and call witnesses specifically related to the incident which caused the suspension or placement on administrative leave.
 - (e) Within ten (10) calendar days following the conference, the superintendent is to notify the employee by registered mail if disciplinary action is to be taken, the nature of the disciplinary action, the effective date(s) of such action,, and the appeal process.
 - (f) Should the superintendent rule in favor of the individual in cases where leave or suspension without pay has been enforced, the restoration of salary and position shall become effective immediately.
- (3) Board Hearing of Appeals
 - (a) The employee shall have ten (10) calendar days from the date of the letter of disciplinary action to request a hearing with the Board of Education. This request shall be in writing and specifically cite the reasons for an appeal. No sooner than ten (10) days nor later than twenty (20) days of the superintendent's letter, the Board of Education will arrange a hearing to hear the individual's appeal and render a decision following the appeal.
 - (b) The individual shall have an opportunity to be heard before the county Board (or the hearing officer) in person or by counsel, and to bring witnesses to the hearing.
 - (c) The superintendent shall present his or her recommendation for disciplinary action along with all documentation, evidence, and supportive data.. including evidence that the employee has been duly notified of the impending action. If the case is heard by a hearing officer, then the procedures in policy and regulations shall be followed.
 - (d) The decision of the Board of Education of Somerset County may be appealed to the State Board of Education.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Policy #700-34 - Violation of Criminal Laws (Pending Board Approval)

A. General Statement

Persons employed by the Somerset County Board of Education must not, by their actions, deeds or teachings, in any way violate, encourage, or condone the violation of criminal laws of the State of Maryland, or any other state of the United States of America.

B. Violation of Laws

In the event that it is established to the satisfaction of the Board of Education that there has been any act in violation of criminal laws of the state of Maryland, or any other state of the United States of America by any school employee, and that the violation alleged is one involving a felony, a controlled dangerous substance, a crime of moral turpitude, a child abuse offense, or any other offense which would, in the sole discretion of the Board, appear to affect the fitness of that employee to perform the customary role for which he or she is employed, the same will be grounds for dismissal.

C. Hearing Process

Such employee will be entitled, upon request, to a hearing before the Somerset County Board of Education in regard to such dismissal. At such a hearing, the standard of proof required to establish such action shall be the same as the standard of proof before any other administrative agency under the laws of the State of Maryland, or any other state of the United States of America, and in the event such a decision is appealed, the review of such decision shall be subject to the same review standards as are applicable to the reviews of decisions of Maryland administrative agencies. At such a hearing, the conviction of an employee or the granting of probation before judgment to an employee, which is accepted or acquiesced in by the employee, shall be deemed to be prima facie evidence that the employee has violated the criminal laws of the State of Maryland, or any other state of the United States of America, and that grounds for dismissal exist, and shall shift the burden of proof and expenses incurred in such proof to the employee to establish to the contrary.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I, hereby, certify that I have received a copy of the Somerset County Public Schools Employee Handbook and understand that I am to read it and am encouraged to discuss any questions that I may have as to its contents with my immediate supervisor or with the supervisor of human resources, now or at any time during my employment.

Name _____
(Please Print)

Signature _____

Date _____