

Dougherty County School System

Personnel Handbook

2010-2011

Prepared By:

DCSS Public Information Office
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Welcome

Welcome to the Dougherty County School System. We know you will enjoy being a part of a school system in which we are proud of our many successes.

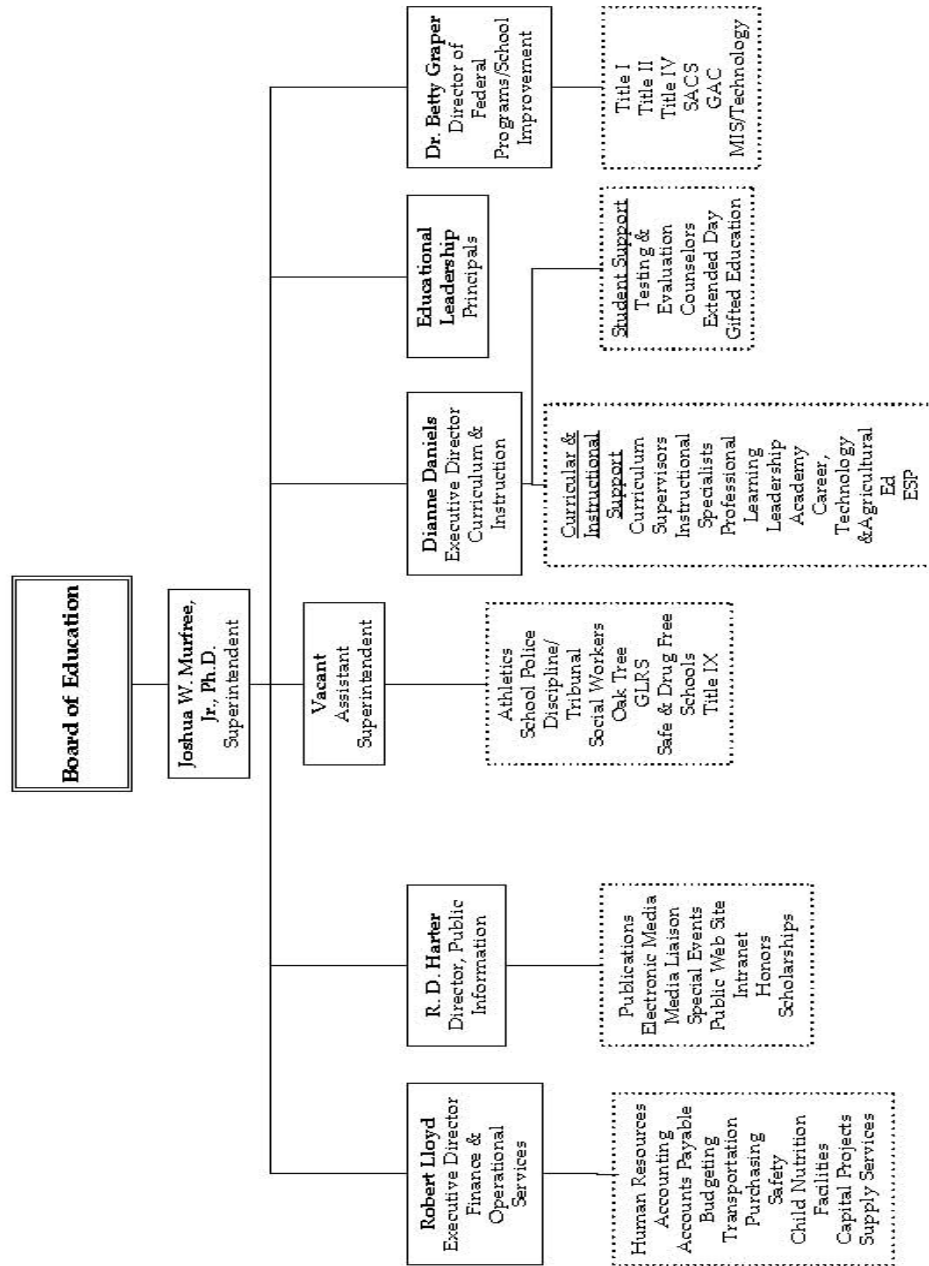
You represent the Dougherty County School System! People in Dougherty County base their opinions of the school system on their personal experiences with school employees. Whether you are at work or elsewhere, people see you as a reflection of the schools. That means you represent our schools all of the time, and the image of the school system depends on you. Your enthusiasm about public schools is catching. Spread it around!

This handbook is meant get you off to a good start in the school system and to answer some of your questions. It is not intended to take the place of School Board policies which are available in each school, in each department, in the School Administration Building and online at <http://www.docoschools.org>. As questions or problems arise, please ask your principal or the administration offices to help you.

The Dougherty County School System is an equal opportunity institution and complies with applicable federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. It is the policy of the Dougherty County School System that no person, on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, marital status, age or handicap, shall be discriminated against in employment, educational programs and activities, or admissions.

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Personnel Policies

All employees of the Dougherty County Public School System are responsible for acquainting themselves with the policies and rules of the Board of Education and of the school or department that employs them. The Dougherty County Board Policy Manual is available in each school's media center, the principal's office, the central office, or online at <http://www.docoschools.org>.

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Equal Opportunity Employment (GAAA)

The Dougherty County School System is an Equal Opportunity Employer and complies with the applicable federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination, including Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. It is the policy of the Dougherty County School System that no person on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, marital status, age, or handicap shall be discriminated against in the employment, educational programs, and activities of the Dougherty County School System.

Professional Personnel Hiring (GBD)

Applications for employment for teachers (certified personnel) shall be accepted by the Human Resources Department. References named by the applicant shall be requested to complete and return recommendation forms which are provided. These recommendations become a part of the applicant's personnel record and are, therefore, subject to the district's Human Resources Records Policy.

When a vacancy occurs, the principal of the receiving school shall select several applications for persons who seem to be best qualified for the position, provided several applications are available. Faculty ratio and comparability for the school shall be considered in selecting the appropriate applications for the position. An interview shall be scheduled with the Principal. The supervisor for the area under consideration may also be asked to interview the applicants. Upon completion of this process, using input from all sources, a selection is made and a recommendation is made to the Superintendent.

Employment of Personnel

Fingerprinting & Criminal Records Checks (GAK-1)

Fingerprint and Criminal Record Checks Prior to Employment

In order to be employed for the first time after March 14, 2005, by the Dougherty County Board of Education, any applicant must first submit to a fingerprint and criminal records check which will be conducted by and through the office of the Dougherty County School System Police Department. Such fingerprinting and criminal record check shall be required even though the applicant may already

have undergone fingerprinting and criminal record checks by another school system in Georgia or elsewhere.

Prior to Provisional Hiring

All required documentation shall be forwarded to, reviewed and processed by the Human Resources Department before any **offer** of employment can be extended, whether contracted labor, substitute status, or regular employment status with the Dougherty County Board of Education.

Criminal Backgrounds

Nothing in this policy shall in any way be construed to conflict with and, in all instances, shall yield to the Georgia First Offender Act, O.C.G.A. §42-8-60 et. Seq., O.C.G.A. §16-13-2©, and all other applicable Georgia law.

Dougherty County Board of Education **will not** employ any person with a recent (within the last fifteen (15) years) felony conviction, including any person who has entered a plea of guilty or nolo contendere to a charge where the charge is a felony. Dougherty County Board of Education adopts a zero tolerance policy for drug convictions found on any criminal background check and will not employ any person that has any conviction(s) for any crime relating to the usage of or possession of any illegal drug(s) as defined in Dougherty County Board Policy GAMA, whether the conviction is a misdemeanor or felony within the last fifteen (15) years. Dougherty County Board of Education will not employ any person with a conviction of any crime related to child cruelty, assault and/or battery to a minor, endangering the welfare of a minor, selling or providing alcohol to any minor, any offensive acts involving a child/minor, whether the charge is a misdemeanor or felony. Dougherty County Board of Education will not employ any person with a pattern of habitual criminal activity; more than three (3) convictions for any single offense or crime, including DUI; whether the conviction is a misdemeanor or felony; any criminal activity in the current calendar year; whether the conviction is a misdemeanor or felony; except traffic related offenses/driving without insurance/driving with suspended license. Dougherty County Board of Education will terminate the employment of any person who has willfully misrepresented himself on the criminal background check sheet, withholding arrest or conviction information that is discovered by the GBI, FBI or any other law enforcement agency.

Continued Employment of Personnel

All certificated employees whose employment is renewed after March 14, 2005, as well as those hired prior to that date who were not fingerprinted or did not have a criminal background check, shall have a criminal record check made upon any certificate renewal application to the Professional Standards Commission.

All personnel whose employment is continued after March 14, 2005, shall have a criminal record check made according to a schedule determined by the Superintendent and approved by the Board, but at a minimum such criminal record checks shall be made at least every three years.

Employees that have been convicted for a crime during active employment that do not self-report the conviction within three (3) business days will face disciplinary action, including reprimand, suspension, and/or termination.

Change of Employee Status

Prior to a change in the employment status of any employee, there shall be a criminal records check. A change in employment status shall be: (a) change from non-certified to certified status, (b) promotion to any upgraded position, (c) any transfer from one administrative position to another, (d) any other change in employment status that, in the direction of the Superintendent, warrants a criminal records check and should be reviewed by the Director of Human Resources.

Fees

Any fees for fingerprinting or any other expense associated with any criminal background check shall be paid by the applicant. Fingerprinting fees and other expenses associated with any criminal background check for existing employees shall be paid by the System unless the background check discloses any unreported violation in which case the fee shall be paid by the employee.

Use and Handling of Criminal Record Information

Criminal record check information shall be used by the Dougherty County Board of Education, its officials and employees only for the purpose of determining whether to grant regular employment and in any administrative or judicial proceeding calling such employment in question. Such information shall be

stored, restricted and disposed of in such manner as may be required by federal or state regulations.

Staff Development (GAD)

The Dougherty County Board of Education endorses and is committed to the concept of professional development for its employees. The overall responsibility for the development and implementation of a staff development plan shall be that of the Executive Director for Curriculum and Instruction. All employees shall be provided opportunities to enhance and expand job related skills and competencies. Credit for participation in such activities may be applied toward professional certification requirements in accordance with the Dougherty County Comprehensive Plan for Professional Learning and Georgia Department of Education. Each principal shall plan and conduct at least two school level activities for all employees (certificated and non-certificated) annually. The principal shall submit a plan for such school level professional learning for approval by the Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction by October 1 of each year.

The Comprehensive Staff Development Plan shall be updated annually and submitted to and approved by the Board of Education prior to its transmittal to the Georgia Department of Education.

A professional learning advisory committee shall be appointed in compliance with State Board of Education rules.

Staff Development for Teachers Who Remove Students From Class (GADA)

Any teacher who removes more than two students from his or her total class enrollment in any school year under O.C.G.A. * 20-2-738 who are subsequently returned to the class by a placement review committee because such class is the best available alternative may (shall) be required to complete professional development to improve classroom management skills, other skills on the identification and remediation of academic and behavioral student needs, or other instructional skills as identified in a plan derived by the principal of the school in consultation with the teacher.

Complaints and Grievances - Certified Employees (GAE-2)

The Dougherty County Board of Education believes that a complaint and grievance policy for its certified employees makes it easier to resolve problems that may arise between certified employees and/or supervisors and/or the Board of Education.

Section 1. Purpose: Informal Resolution Preferred

(a) Purpose. It is the purpose of this policy to implement the provisions of the Act of the General assembly of 1992, O.C.G.A. & 20-2-989.5, et seq. In accordance with the foregoing, it is the policy of the Board of Education that certified employees shall have the right to present and resolve complaints relating to certain matters affecting the employment relationship at the lowest organizational level possible.

(b) Informal Resolution Preferred. The Board of Education encourages all certified employees to resolve their complaints informally in a spirit of collegiality where possible. The policy and procedure is available where such efforts do not succeed or where, for any reason, the certified employee desires to pursue this procedure.

Section 2. Definitions

(a) "Level One Administrator" means the principal of a school with respect to teachers and other personnel assigned to a school. With respect to employees not assigned to a school, "Level One Administrator" means the following person most immediately responsible for the certified employee: Department Head, Executive Director or Deputy Superintendent, or Superintendent.

(b) "Central Office Administrator" means the Superintendent.

(c) "Complaint" means any claim or grievance by a certified employee of this school district which is filed pursuant to this policy and which comes within the scope of the policy.

(d) "Notification" means deliver in person to the party entitled to notification or deposit in the United States Mail, certified mail, return receipt requested, to the last known address of the party notified.

Section 3. Scope of Complaint: Exclusions

(a) Scope. Unless excluded by paragraph (b) hereof, this complaint and grievance procedure is applicable to any claim by any certified employee who is affected in his/her employment relationship by an alleged violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of statutes, policies, rules, regulations, or written agreements of this school district or with which the district is required to comply.

(b) Exclusions. This procedure shall not apply to: (1) performance ratings contained in personnel evaluation and professional development plans, (2) job performance, (3) termination, non-renewal, demotions, suspension, or reprimand of any employee, and (4) the revocation, suspension, or denial of certificates of any employee, as set forth in O.C.G.A. & 20-2-790.

An employee who chooses to appeal under O.C.G.A. & 20-2-1160 shall be barred from pursuing the same complaint under this policy.

Section 4. Hearing Rights: Evidence: Representation: Decisions: Records

(a) Hearing Rights: Evidence. The complainant shall be entitled to an opportunity to be heard, to present relevant evidence, and to examine witnesses at each level, but the complainant may not present additional evidence at the second or third hearing levels unless notice of the complainant's intention and the evidence to be presented are submitted in writing five days prior to the hearing to the administrator who will preside at such level and in the case of the Board of Education, to the Superintendent. When hearing an appeal from a prior level, the Board of Education shall hear and decide all appeals de novo.

(b) Representation. The complainant and the administrator against whom the complaint is filed or whose decision is appealed shall be entitled to the presence of an individual, including an attorney to assist in the presentation of the complaint and the response thereto, at the Central Office Administrator level and at the Board of Education level. The presence of any individual other than the complainant and the administrator at Level One is prohibited, except witnesses who present testimony or documents.

(c) Hearing Officer. The Board of Education may appoint a member of the State Bar to serve as law officer who shall rule on all issues of law and other objections, but such attorney shall not assist in the presentation of the case for either party.

(d) Overall Hearing Time Schedules. The overall time frame from the initiation of the complaint until rendition of the decision by the Board of Education of notification thereof to the complainant shall not exceed 60 days.

(e) Automatic Referral to Next Level. Any complaint not processed by the administrator or the local unit of administration within the time frame required by the policy shall be forwarded to the next level of determination.

(f) Records. Accurate records of the proceedings at each level shall be kept; the proceedings shall be recorded by mechanical means; all evidence shall be preserved and made available to the parties at all times; and all costs and fees shall be borne by the party incurring them unless otherwise agreed upon by the parties; except that the cost of preparing and preserving the record of the proceedings shall be borne by the Board of Education. Provided however, the cost of transcribing the transcript of evidence and proceedings before the Board of Education shall be borne by the party requesting same, and all costs of the record on appeal to the superior courts and appellate courts shall be paid by the party required to do so by the laws relating thereto.

(g) Decisions. Each decision shall be made in writing and dated and shall contain findings of fact and reasons for the particular decision reached.

(h) Notice. The decision at each level shall be delivered to the complainant by a person designated by the Superintendent either by: (1) being hand-delivered or (2) being deposited in the United States Mail, certified mail, return receipt requested. Notice to the complainant shall be deemed to have been made on the date of hand delivery or on the date of deposit in the United State Mail by certified mail, return receipt requested to the address stated in the complaint or, if not contained in the complaint, to the last known address of the complainant on file with the Board of Education.

Section 5. First Level: Presentation: Time: Contents

The complaint shall be presented in writing to the Level One Administrator within 10 calendar days after the most recent incident upon which the complaint is based. The complaint shall include the following:

- (a) The mailing address of the complainant to which all notices and other documents may be mailed;
- (b) The intent of the complainant to utilize this complaint procedure, clearly stated;
- (c) A reference or description of the statute, policy, rule, contract provision or regulation that is alleged to have been violated, misinterpreted or misapplied;
- (d) A brief statement of the facts reasonably calculated to show how such statute, policy, rule or regulation was violated or misapplied, and how it substantially affects the employment relationship or the complainant; and
- (e) A statement of the relief desired.

Section 6. First Level: Hearing and Decision

The Level One Administrator shall record the date of filing on the complaint and shall give notice to the complainant of the time and place of the hearing, either by mail or hand delivery. When notice is given by mail, it shall be sent by first class mail to the address set forth in the complaint. If no address was included in the complaint, the notice shall be sent to the last known address of the complainant on file with the Board of Education. The Level One Administrator shall conduct a hearing on the complaint and render a decision thereon within 10 days of the filing of the complaint. The decision shall be dated, and a copy shall be sent to the complainant as provided in Section 4 above.

Section 7. Second Level: Appeal from First Level to Central Office Administrator

A complainant dissatisfied with the decision of the first level shall be entitled to appeal to the Central Office Administrator by filing written notice of appeal with the Office of the Superintendent. The appeal must be filed within 10 calendar days after the complainant is notified of the Level One decision. The Central Office

Administrator shall record the date, time and place of the hearing by mail or delivery. The Level Two Administrator shall obtain copies of all minutes, transcripts, documents, and other records relating to the complaint and shall conduct a hearing and render decisions within 10 calendar days of the date of the filing of the appeal, or the hearing may be conducted by any designated representative of the Level Two Administrator who shall promptly submit his/her recommendations and findings to the Level Two Administrator for final decision. the decision shall be rendered and served on the complainant and complainant's attorney in accordance with Section 4(h) above.

Section 8. Third Level: Appeal to Board of Education

A complainant or Level One Administrator dissatisfied with the decision of the Central Office Administrator may appeal to the Board of Education by filing written notice of appeal with the Office of the Superintendent. The appeal must be filed within 10 calendar days after the date of the decision as provided in Section 4 above. The Superintendent shall record the date of filing on the appeal and shall promptly give the notice to the complainant in writing of the time and place of hearing by mail or by hand delivery. The complainant and the Administrator against whom the complaint is filed or whose decision is being appealed shall be entitled to appear before the Board of Education and be heard. The Board of Education may direct that a pre-hearing conference be held prior to the hearing to identify issues and facilitate presentation. The Board of Education shall conduct a hearing and render its decision in writing within 20 calendar days after the hearing and perfect service thereof on the complainant and his attorney, all in accordance with Section 4(h).

Section 9. Appeals to State Board

Appeals from the decision of the Board of Education to the State Board of Education shall be governed by the State Board Rule (BCAEA) governing appeals and O.C.G.A. & 20-2-1160.

Section 10. Reprisals Prohibited

No employee shall be subjected to reprisals as a result of filing any complaint under this policy.

Section 11. Collective Bargaining Disclaimer

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to permit or foster collective bargaining.

Section 12. Repeals

All policies and parts of policies in conflict herewith are repealed.

Complaints and Grievances - Classified Employees (GAE -3)

The Dougherty County Board of Education believes that a complaint and grievance policy for its classified employees makes it easier to resolve problems that may arise between classified employees and/or supervisors. The Board of Education urges all classified employees to resolve their complaints informally in a spirit of congeniality where possible. This policy and procedure is available where such efforts do not succeed or where for any reason the classified employee decides to pursue this procedure.

Section 1. Definitions

- (a) The term "Supervisor" shall mean the department head or the principal of the department or school in which the employee works.
- (b) The term "Superintendent" shall mean the Superintendent of the Dougherty County School System.

Section 2. Scope of Complaint: Exclusion

- (a) Scope. Unless excluded by paragraph (b) of this section, this complaint and grievance procedure is applicable to any claim by any classified employee who is affected in his/her employment relationship by an alleged violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of statutes, rules, regulations, or written agreements of this school district or with which the district is required to comply.
- (b) Exclusions. This procedure shall not apply to: (1) performance ratings contained in personnel evaluations (2) job performance, (3) termination, demotion, suspension, or reprimand of any employee.

Any employee who chooses to appeal under O.C.G.A. & 20-2-1160 shall be barred from pursuing the same complaint under this policy.

Section 3. Hearings: Evidence: Representation: Decisions

- (a) Hearings: Evidence. The complainant shall be entitled to an

opportunity to be heard, to present relevant evidence, and to examine witnesses before the employee's supervisor. The complainant may not present additional witnesses or evidence not presented in the hearing before the supervisor should the complaint be heard before the Superintendent.

(b) Representation. Complainant and the supervisor against whom the complaint is filed or whose decision is appealed shall be entitled to the presence of an individual, including an attorney, to assist in the presentation of the complaint and response thereto to the Superintendent. The presence of any individual other than the complainant and witnesses who present testimony or documents at the hearing before supervisor is prohibited.

(c) Overall Hearing Time Schedules. The overall time frame from the initiation of the complaint until the decision by the Superintendent shall not exceed 60 days. Should the complaint not be heard by the supervisor within 30 days of the filing of the complaint, it shall be automatically heard by the Superintendent.

(d) Decision. The decision of the supervisor and the Superintendent shall be made in writing and shall contain facts supporting and/or reasons for the particular decision. The decision by the Supervisor and the Superintendent shall be (1) hand-delivered or (2) deposited in the United States Mail, certified mail, return receipt requested. Notice to complainant shall be deemed to have been made on the date of hand-delivery or on the date of deposit in the United States Mail by certified mail, return receipt requested to the address stated in the complaint or, if not contained in the complaint, to the last known address of the complainant on file with the Board of Education.

(h) Notice. The decision at each level shall be delivered to the complainant by a person designated by the Superintendent either by: (1) being hand-delivered or (2) being deposited in the United States Mail, certified mail, return receipt requested. Notice to the complainant shall be deemed to have been made on the date of hand delivery or on the date of deposit in the United States Mail by certified mail, return receipt requested to the address stated in the complaint or, if not contained in the complaint, to the last known address of the complainant on file with the Board of Education.

Section 4. Supervisor Level: Presentation: Time: Contents

The complaint shall be presented in writing to the complainant's supervisor within 10 calendar days after the most recent incident upon which the complaint is based. The complaint shall state the following:

- (a) Mailing address of the complainant to which all notices and other documents may be mailed;
- (b) The intent of the complainant to utilize this complaint procedure, clearly stated;
- (c) A reference or description of the statute, rule, provision or regulation that is alleged to have been violated, misinterpreted or misapplied;
- (d) A brief statement of the facts reasonably calculated to show how such statute, policy, rule or regulation was violated, misinterpreted, or misapplied, and how it substantially affects the employment relationship of the complainant; and
- (e) A statement of the relief desired.

Supervisor shall not hear the complaint unless complainant fully complies with all provisions of this Section 4.

Section 5. Supervisor Level: Hearing and Decision

The supervisor shall conduct a hearing on the complaint and render a decision thereon within 10 calendar days of the filing of the complaint. The decision shall be dated, and a copy shall be sent to the complainant, as provided herein.

Section 6. Appeal from Supervisor to the Superintendent

A complainant dissatisfied with the decision of the first level may appeal the decision of the supervisor to the Superintendent; provided, however, the appeal must be filed within 10 calendar days after the complainant is notified of the supervisor's decision. The Superintendent shall conduct a hearing within 10 calendar days from the date of filing of the appeal. The decision shall be rendered and served on the complainant within 10 days.

Section 7. Board Action: At-will Employees

No procedural requirement of this policy shall alter in any fashion the discretion of the Dougherty County Board of Education to take any action it deems appropriate, nor shall such procedural requirement change the fact that all classified personnel are at-will employees and serve at the pleasure of the Dougherty County Board of Education.

Section 8. Reprisals Prohibited

No employee shall be subjected to reprisals as a result of filing any complaint under this policy.

Section 9. Collective Bargaining Disclaimer

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to permit or foster collective bargaining.

Section 10. Repeals

All policies and parts of policies in conflict herewith are repealed.

Staff Protection (GAEA)

The Dougherty County Board of Education wishes to create and maintain a higher quality working environment for all of its employees and to prevent situations which create stress or offensive working conditions. It is our policy to investigate and deal appropriately with offending personnel.

1. Supervisors may not use their authority to solicit sexual favors from subordinates in such a way as to suggest the employee's failure to submit may result in adverse wage or working conditions, or when acquiescence might result in preferential treatment.
2. Employees who feel that a supervisor is conditioning promotions, wages, or continuance of the job on sexual favors are encouraged to contact the Principal or Superintendent. Employees are also urged to report any objectionable advances of other employees if these actions interfere with the individual's work performance or create a hostile or offensive working environment.
3. Objectionable advances include, but are not limited to, verbal or physical sexual advances, derogatory remarks, social invitations if extended with

some sexual suggestions, or suggestion that employment decisions will be based on refusal or acquiescence.

4. Complaints will be investigated if the facts appear to support such a complaint. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, including, but not limited to, verbal warning, written reprimand or dismissal of the offending personnel.

5. Complaints under the policy shall be filed within one year after the most recent incident upon which the complaint is based.

Sexual Harassment (GAEB)

It is the policy of the Dougherty County Board of Education to maintain a learning environment that is free from sexual harassment. It shall be a violation of this policy for any member of the district staff or a Board Member to harass an employee through conduct or communications of a sexual nature as defined below.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other inappropriate oral, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when made by an employee or Board Member to another employee constitutes sexual harassment when:

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

Sexual harassment as defined above may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Verbal harassment or abuse;
- Pressure for sexual activity;
- Unwelcome touching; and
- Suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or

explicit threats concerning retention, promotion, pay, or any other terms and conditions of employment.

Any person who alleges sexual harassment by an employee or Board Member may complain directly to a principal, supervisor, director, Executive Director, the Director of Human Resources, or Superintendent, as may be appropriate under the circumstances. Filing a complaint or otherwise reporting sexual harassment will not reflect upon the individual's status nor will it affect future employment or job assignments.

The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected consistent with the Board's legal obligations and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and take corrective action with then conduct has occurred.

All allegations of sexual harassment shall be fully investigated, and immediate and appropriate corrective or disciplinary action shall be initiated by the Superintendent. A substantiated charge against an employee shall subject such person to disciplinary action; including discharge.

All certificated and classified personnel are to maintain professional, ethical relationships with students. Employees shall refrain from improper fraternization or conduct implying undue familiarity or intimacy with students. Dating between employees and students is strictly prohibited.

Gifts to Employees (GAJB)

Employees of the Dougherty County School System may not accept gifts from any individual, group, business, organization or vendor who does business with the Board of Education or with any of the individual schools. In addition to tangible items, this policy shall prohibit the acceptance of tickets, trips, vacations, samples, or any item of monetary value.

This policy shall not prohibit the contribution of equipment, services or financial support to the district or school. Equipment contributed to the system or to a school becomes the property of the Dougherty County Board of Education and subject to the same controls and regulations that govern other school-owned property. Financial gifts shall be accounted for in accordance with regular accounting procedures.

Legal Garnishments (GAL)

The Dougherty County Board of Education strongly encourages all of its employees to promptly pay all just debts. Failure to do so reflects adversely not only upon the person but also upon the school system and the education profession. Garnishment procedures result in an additional administrative burden and costs to the Board of Education.

All legal garnishments will be served on the Executive Director for Finance and Operations. The employee will be notified and appropriate steps taken to comply with the garnishment requirements.

Whenever a legal garnishment against the wages of an employee is received, the following procedures will be followed:

1. First garnishment within a year (any 12-month period). A copy of the notice to the employee will be placed in the employee's personnel file. The employee will be counseled by his/her department head.
2. Second garnishment within a year. The Executive Director for Finance and Operations will send a letter of reprimand to the employee. A copy of the letter will be placed in the employee's personnel file. The employee will be counseled by his/her department head.
3. Third and subsequent garnishment within a year. The employee may be terminated.

For purposes of this policy, continuation garnishments against the same indebtedness shall not be counted.

In hardship cases, upon the recommendation of the Executive Director for Finance and Operations, the Superintendent may approve probation instead of termination. Any subsequent garnishment, other than a continuation garnishment, within the ensuing six months would result in automatic termination.

Professional Contracts (GBA)

Before the election of any professional employee shall become effective, a written contract with such employee shall be made. The contract with the Superintendent shall be signed by the Board acting through its Chair. The contract with each

professional employee, except the Superintendent, shall be signed in behalf of the Board by the Superintendent.

Recruitment of Personnel (GBC)

The Dougherty County School System does not undertake an extensive recruiting program because the system is in close proximity to several colleges. These institutions provide a supply of applicants such that the school system does not have to undertake an extensive recruiting program.

However, in specific instances where there is a shortage of teachers in a particular area, personnel from the central office may visit college campuses or use other modes of contact to recruit for these areas.

New or vacated positions will be made known to all educational personnel through the Dougherty County School System Intranet and Internet and/or through other electronic media including TeachGeorgia (Ga PSC web site). Announcements shall be sent to appropriate colleges and universities and the State Department of Education using the prescribed SBOE vacancy posting process.

Announcements of new or vacated supervisory positions will remain open after the initial announcement for a period of 10 business days prior to approval of the Superintendent's recommendation by the Dougherty County Board of Education. Provided, however, nothing contained herein shall prevent the Superintendent from recommending and the Board approving personnel for administrative positions before the conclusion of the 10 business day period provided that new or vacated administrative positions have been posted as provided in this policy. The posting shall provide that the position may be filled at any time at the discretion of the Superintendent and the Board of Education.

The Dougherty County School System is an equal opportunity institution and complies with applicable federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. It is the policy of the Dougherty County School System that no person, on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, marital status, age, or handicap, shall be discriminated against in employment, educational programs and activities or admissions.

Procedure for Hiring

Employees of the Dougherty County School System are appointed by the Board of Education. The responsibility of recommending the hiring and discharge of employees shall be that of the Superintendent. To assist the Superintendent in these duties, Deputy/Executive Directors, Principals, Directors and separate Department Heads are designated as Hiring Officials.

Hiring Officials should work closely with the Director of Human Resources to recommend to the Superintendent the best candidate to fill an open position.

All persons seeking employment with the Dougherty County School System must make application for employment with the Director of Human Resources. Included as part of the application are forms for security authorization, teaching certificates when appropriate, and other necessary documentation. The Security Clearance will be processed immediately by the Director of Human Resources in cooperation/coordination with the DCSS Police Department.

Requests for Lateral Transfers

All employees may file a request for a lateral transfer with the Human Resources Department during the month of March for positions that the employee would be interested in for the following school year. The employee who requests a transfer is assured that the position which he/she currently occupies is secure, providing no recommendation for termination has been made.

Voluntary transfer requests will be sent to the supervisors at all locations in which the employee requests a transfer. Supervisors or principals are required to interview, but not accept, employees who request a transfer to their location provided a vacancy occurs which the requesting employee is qualified to hold.

Upon completion of the interview process, the requested principal/director will make his/her recommendations for transfer to the Human Resources Director. Forms of persons who have been accepted for transfer by the requested principal/director will be sent to the employee's current supervisor to make him/her aware of the desired transfer. Forms will be returned to the Human Resources Director for approval. Forms will be sent to the Deputy Superintendent for final approval.

Evaluation of Instructional Personnel (GBI)

The evaluation of instructional personnel shall be a process through which the principal or supervisor provides guidelines, suggests ways to overcome difficulties, makes recommendations, and determines the progress of a teacher's professional performance. The principal or supervisor has the responsibility of making a thorough, fair, and objective evaluation of all instructional personnel under the principal's supervision in accordance with the Georgia Teacher Evaluation Program (GTEP) and with Georgia law. Principals shall have as the primary purpose for personnel evaluation, the growth of individual teachers as well as the strengthening of the total school staff.

Each teacher shall be provided a copy of the official evaluation form at the time the signature of the teacher is affixed.

During pre-planning each new teacher shall be provided with copies of the forms to be used in their official evaluation. Should a teacher's overall performance be deemed less than satisfactory, he shall be provided in writing the specific area where improvement is needed prior to his final evaluation. The official evaluation form shall provide the option for comments by the teacher.

Evaluation Instruments

The Georgia Teacher Evaluation Program (GTEP) includes the use of two instruments -- the Georgia Teacher Observation Instrument (GTOI) and the Georgia Teacher Duties and Responsibilities Instrument (GTDRI). These two instruments shall be used for the annual evaluation of teacher personnel.

Evaluation of Classified Personnel (GCI)

An evaluation of the performance of duties and responsibilities shall be made annually for all classified employees. Such assessment shall be conducted by the principal or the person directly responsible for the supervision of the employee. Such assessment shall be submitted to the Superintendent no later than March 15 of the school year.

Complaints (Georgia Teacher Evaluation Program - Evaluation Manual pp. 13 & 14)

Guidelines for contract renewal or discharge during the contract term are governed by the Fair Dismissal Law (20-2-940 through 20-2-947). For example an official notice of non-renewal given to a tenured teacher **must** include a copy of this law. Further, any use of the results of the Georgia Teacher Evaluation Program as part of contract decisions should be in compliance with this law.

In cases where the action taken is not applicable under the Fair Dismissal Law and the teacher disagrees with the evaluation procedures or results, complaints may be registered in the following manner.

1. A conference to discuss observation results may be requested by the teacher within **10** working days of receipt of results. Upon request, the evaluator is **required to hold such a conference**.
2. Teachers may attach written comments to the evaluation records such as Observation Records, Annual Evaluation Summary Reports, Professional Development Plans, and any documentation related to the GTDRI. The attachment **must** be submitted within **10** working days of receipt of these records. When comments are attached to evaluation records, the teacher should indicate the presence of the attachment in the appropriate space on the form. These written statements must be maintained as part of the official record.
3. Teachers who wish to pursue alleged violations of GTEP procedures in cases where observations were conducted by evaluators other than the principal, may schedule a conference with the evaluator. If the complaint is not resolved with the evaluator, the teachers may, within 10 working days of the conference with the evaluator, schedule a conference with the principal. The principal is required to hold the conference.
4. Teachers who wish to pursue alleged violations of the GTEP **procedures** beyond complaints registered at the school level shall follow the appropriate procedures or policies of the local unit of administration. In cases where there are no procedures or policies, teachers may pursue the issue directly with the local Superintendent or designee. The request for review **must** be filed within **10** working days of the occurrence of the alleged violation or receipt of the Observation Record, documentation, or

Annual Evaluation Summary Report. This request **must** include the reasons for the complaint and copies of all supporting documentation. Within **20** working days, the Superintendent or designee must consider the request and provide a written decision. Local decisions may not be appealed in the Georgia Board of Education.

5. As stated previously, all cases in which salary increments are withheld will be reviewed by the local Superintendent or designee.

6. State salary steps will be denied if a teacher receives unsatisfactory on the annual evaluation. These must be reviewed by the Superintendent or designee.

Drug-Free Workplace (GAMA)

This policy is established to prevent and eliminate use of illegal drugs in the Dougherty County School System and to ensure that all employees understand the important role they have in the education process of the children of this county and the serious negative impact on their physical and mental well-being resulting from the use of illegal drugs. In accordance with Georgia's Drug-Free Public Work Force Act of 1990, the Board of Education hereby declares that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, sale and possession of controlled substances, alcohol, or other dangerous drugs is prohibited in the workplace.

For purposes of the policy, the following definitions shall apply:

1. "Illegal drug" means marijuana as defined in paragraph sixteen (16) of Code Section 16-13-21, as amended; a controlled substance as defined in paragraph (4) of Code Section 16-31-21, as amended, a dangerous drug as defined in O.C.G.A. §16-13-71, as amended; or any other controlled substance or dangerous drug that persons are prohibited from using. The term "illegal drug" shall not include any drug when used pursuant to a valid medical prescription or when used as otherwise authorized by state or federal law.
2. "Convicted" or "conviction" refers to a final conviction in a court of competent jurisdiction or the acceptance of a plea of guilty;
3. "Public employee" means any person employed on a full-time, part-time, temporary, or intermittent basis.

4. "Public employer" means the Dougherty County School System.
5. "Workplace" means the place where an employee is working which can include, but not necessarily be limited to, school property, buses, school activities or any other place an employee is performing duties for the employer.

To accomplish this goal of a Drug-Free Workplace the Dougherty County School System shall implement a program consisting of (1) Standards of Conduct, (2) Disciplinary Sanctions, (3) Drug Testing, and (4) Confidentiality and Assistance.

Standards of Conduct

- A. The use of or possession of any controlled substance or of alcohol while on DCSS premises or as part of any of its activities is prohibited.
- B. The sale, distribution of, or provision of any controlled substance or of alcohol while on DCSS premises or as part of any of its activities is prohibited.
- C. Reporting to work or working while under the influence of or impaired by any controlled substance or by alcohol is prohibited.
- D. Controlled substance or alcohol related off-duty conduct that would tend to undermine the reputation, authority or efficiency of the DCSS is prohibited.
- E. An employee convicted of the violation of any criminal drug statute shall report this conviction to the Superintendent within five days of the conviction.

Disciplinary Sanctions

Any employee who violates this policy or these standards of conduct will be subject to constructive disciplinary action taken for the purpose of correcting the offending employee and maintaining discipline and morale among other employees. These sanctions include:

- A. Reprimand
- B. Suspension with or without pay.
- C. Requirement for employees on own initiative and at own expense to

enter into an authorized drug/alcohol rehabilitation program, licensed under Chapter 5 of Title 26, and successfully complete the program.

D. Termination. (Any employee convicted of the sale or distribution of a controlled substance or alcohol shall be terminated for the first offense.)

E. A certified employee who has rights to continued employment with the school system, as defined under O.C.G.A. 20-2-942, shall be offered a hearing as provided for under the Fair Dismissal Act 20-2-940 et seq. The violation of any provision of this policy GAMA shall constitute "good and sufficient cause" for termination within the meaning of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-940(8).

Drug Testing

A. Drug Screening for Cause

1. If in the opinion of the supervisor, a reasonable suspicion (A reasonable suspicion must be based on objective indications of substance abuse. Some of the more obvious indications of controlled substance abuse include repeated unauthorized absences, repeated illnesses, bloodshot eyes, slurred speech, lethargic behavior, or behavior inappropriate or inconsistent with circumstances.) exists that the employee is reporting to work or is working while under the influence of a controlled substance or while impaired from the use of same, the following procedures shall be followed.

a. The supervisor shall arrange, if possible, for at least one other supervisor to observe the conduct of the employee. The observing supervisor shall make a written report of the incident, which report shall include a description of the conduct of the employee upon which such reasonable suspicion is based, and be submitted immediately to the Director of Human Resources.

b. The employee under suspicion will be asked to explain the appearance of being under the influence of a controlled substance. If the employee's explanation is not to the satisfaction of the Associate/Assistant Superintendent, a drug screen test will be ordered. Refusal to submit to such test shall be reason for termination.

c. Accidents. Any employee involved in a workplace related accident

under circumstances which in the opinion of such employee's supervisor create a reasonable suspicion that was due in whole or in part, or was contributed to, by the use by such employee of illegal drugs or alcohol shall be required to submit to drug testing as provided in this section. Refusal to submit to such testing shall be a ground for disciplinary action, including termination.

B. Random Drug Testing of Bus Drivers and Security Officers

1. DCSS bus drivers and security officers are subject to random drug testing.
2. Random drug testing may include simultaneous testing of all DCSS bus drivers or security officers, or testing of persons in these positions by use of selected digits of the social security number.
3. Random drug testing will be accomplished as and when directed by the Superintendent or Board of Education and will conform to all applicable law, including O.C.G.A. §20-2-1121 (relating to Random Drug Testing for School Bus Drivers).
4. Refusal to submit to such testing shall be grounds for termination.

C. Rehabilitation

1. If confirmed results of the test for substance abuse indicate the presence of an illegal drug, the employee will be placed on suspension without pay for a period of sixty (60) days. The employee will be required to enter a drug/alcohol rehabilitation program on own initiative and expense. At the end of the suspension period and upon completion of a drug/alcohol rehabilitation program, the employee may return to work. The employee shall present a written statement from the rehabilitation official. Upon returning to work, such employee shall be subject to periodic drug testing for whatever period is deemed necessary. Failure to complete rehabilitation satisfactorily will ordinarily result in termination of employment with the Dougherty County School System. A second set of confirmed results of a test for substance abuse will result in termination.

Confidentiality and Assistance

- A. Employees are assured that every reasonable effort will be made to protect confidentiality of the findings of drug testing or the investigation of substance abuse.
- B. To assist employees, a list of drug and alcohol counseling and rehabilitation agencies has been provided to all schools and departments.
- C. If, prior to an arrest for an offense involving an illegal drug or alcohol, an employee notifies the Board of Education or designee that the employee illegally uses an illegal drug or alcohol and is receiving treatment under a drug abuse treatment and education program licensed under Chapter 5 or Title 26, the employee shall be entitled to maintain employment for up to one year as long as the employee follows the treatment plan. If illegal use of an illegal drug or alcohol continues beyond the one year rehabilitation period, then the employee shall be subject to disciplinary action as defined in section 2 of this policy. During this period, the employee shall not be separated from employment solely on the basis of the employee's drug dependence, but employee's work activities may be restructured if practicable to protect persons or property. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. §45-23-7, no statement made by an employee to a supervisor of the employee or other person in order to comply with this section shall be admissible in any civil, administrative, or criminal proceedings as evidence against the public employee. The rights granted by this section shall be available to an employee only once during a five-year period and shall not apply to any employee who has refused to be tested or who has tested positive for an illegal drug or alcohol.
- D. Each employee of the Dougherty County School System will be given a copy of Policy GAMA.

**Dismissal/Termination/Suspension/Non-Renewal
(GBN)**

Dismissal/Termination of Certified Employees

Any teacher, principal, or other employee having a contract of employment with the Dougherty County Board of Education for a definite term must be terminated or suspended during the term of the contract following the procedures for terminating and suspending a contract of employment provided in O.C.G.A. & 20-2-940.

Non-Renewal of Contract of Certified Employees

When the Superintendent or Board proposes not to renew the contract of any teacher who accepts a school year contract for the fourth consecutive school year from the Dougherty County Board of Education, the procedures for non-renewal as provided in O.C.G.A. & 20-2-942 shall be followed.

The term "teacher" means any professional school employee certified by the Professional Standards Commission but not including school administrators. 20-2-942 (a) (4).

Dismissal/Termination of Classified Personnel (GCN)

Classified personnel shall be employed to serve at the will of the Dougherty County Board of Education and are not employed for a definite period of time or pursuant to a contract. No property right or expectation of continued employment is created or granted by or with the employment of a classified employee.

Upon the recommendation of a classified employee's department head or principal, the Superintendent shall exercise discretion in deciding whether or not to recommend the dismissal of the classified employee to the Dougherty County Board of Education.

In the course of exercising discretion, the Superintendent may consult with or consider the recommendation of the employee's department head or principal, any and all materials in the employee's personnel file, as well as any other relevant source of information. In addition, at either the choice of the Superintendent or upon the written request of the classified employee, the exercise of the Superintendent's discretion shall include a meeting between the Superintendent and the classified employee. However, if any such meeting occurs, it shall not constitute a hearing of any kind but shall represent solely an opportunity for the Superintendent to learn first hand, and for the employee to personally express, the position of the employee. The Superintendent shall require that taped or written transcript of any such meeting be created, which transcript, together with a written statement of the Superintendent, shall constitute the complete record of the Superintendent's decision. The Superintendent's discretion in fashioning a recommendation to the Board of Education shall not be constrained by any procedural requirement of this policy.

The Board of Education may accept the recommendation of the Superintendent or, at its own election or upon the request of the classified employee, the Board may review the record of the Superintendent's recommendation. No procedural requirement of this section shall alter in any fashion the discretion of the Board of Education to take any action it deems appropriate, nor shall such procedural requirements change the fact that all classified personnel are at-will employees and serve at the pleasure of the Board of Education.

Teacher Workday (GBRB)

Teachers are required to work from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. for 190 days during each school year.

All teachers must be on duty to receive their students by 8:00 a.m. and should use the time after student dismissal until 4:00 p.m. to help students individually, to confer with parents and to plan objectives and activities for their educational program.

Teachers are requested to plan their group meetings and/or personal needs at such time as to prevent conflicts with requirements stated above. If, however, an emergency arises and the teacher must leave at an earlier hour than has been determined by the regulation, the individual is to seek permission from the school principal.

Principals may allow faculty to leave at 3:30 on paydays, Fridays, and days preceding holidays.

Duties

The minimum work day for which the base salary is paid shall include such duties as teaching, preparation for teaching, staff meetings, conferences with students and parents, planning conferences, and other responsibilities related to school activities in the community.

Duty Free Lunch

Every teacher who is employed in grades K-5 for a period of time of more than one-half of the class periods of the regular school day shall be provided a daily lunch period of not less than 30 consecutive minutes, and such employee shall not be assigned any responsibilities during this lunch period. Such lunch period shall be included in the number of hours worked, and no local board of education shall

increase the number of hours to be worked by an employee as a result of such employee's being granted a lunch period. This duty-free lunch period shall not be calculated under any circumstances as a part of any daily planning period or other non-instructional time.

Tobacco-Free Environment (GAN)

Medical evidence clearly shows that smoking is harmful to the health of smokers. Smoke from cigarettes, cigars and pipes is also an irritant to nonsmokers and can worsen allergic conditions. Research indicates that secondhand smoke may seriously threaten the health of nonsmokers.

The purposes of this policy are to protect the health and well-being of the staff and students by providing a tobacco-free environment and to provide a positive example of healthy living practices.

Effective June 10, 1991, the use of all tobacco products was prohibited inside all buildings and vehicles in the Dougherty County School System at all times. The use of tobacco products is prohibited outside of buildings on school board property during normal working hours.

Employment of Classified Personnel (GCD)

The Dougherty County School System is an Equal Opportunity Employer and complies with the applicable federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination, including Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. It is the policy of the Dougherty County School System that no person on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, marital status, age, or handicap shall be discriminated against in the employment, educational programs, and activities of the Dougherty County School System.

Prior to the employment of any classified personnel, an applicant for any position within the Dougherty County School System shall have a criminal record check made prior to the date of employment. Provided, however, the Dougherty County School System can employ classified personnel on a temporary basis until the receipt of the results of the criminal record check. The criminal background check shall be conducted by the Georgia Crime Information Center and the National Crime Information Center. Information provided by the Georgia Crime Information Center or the National Crime Information Center shall be used for the

purposes allowed by O.C.G.A. *35-3-35 or applicable federal laws, rules, and/or regulations.

Each applicant shall sign a release giving consent to conduct a criminal background check through the National Crime Information Center and the Georgia Crime Information Center. The release shall provide that the school system may call all former employers, references, or any individual, business, corporation, government agency, or other school system regarding the applicant when in the judgment of the System such information is necessary for the appropriate evaluation of any applicant.

All classified personnel whose employment is continued after July 1, 2000 shall have a criminal record check made according to a schedule determined by the Superintendent and approved by the Board, but at a minimum such criminal record checks shall be made at least every two years.

Any fees associated with a criminal background check shall be borne by the applicant.

Any applicant found to have falsified an application shall not be eligible for employment with the Dougherty County School System or, in the event they have already been employed, shall be subject to dismissal at the discretion of the Dougherty County Board of Education.

The Dougherty County School System shall not enter into a contract with a classified employee.

Upon approval of the Board of the necessity of hiring classified employees, the duty of recommending such employees to the Board for approval shall be that of the Superintendent.

Student Assignment to Schools (JBCCA)

Each student is required to attend the school within the attendance zone in which the bona fide residence of his or her parent/legal guardian is a bona fide resident. Exceptions shall be made under the following conditions:

1. A student may attend a school outside the student's attendance zone if the student's parent/legal guardian with whom the student resides has that school as a place of employment.

2. A non-resident student whose parent or legal guardian is employed by the Dougherty County School System, who chooses to attend school in Dougherty County, pursuant to Board Policy JBCB, shall attend the school located nearest their residence. If the parent or guardian is employed at the school site, then the non-resident student shall attend school at that school site when they are of proper grade level.

3. A transfer of a student within the Dougherty County School System shall be made only under one of the following conditions:

a. There exists a family emergency. A family emergency shall be illness, hospitalization, loss of employment, or extreme transportation difficulties which make it necessary for the student to attend another school. At any time the emergency ceases to exist, the student shall attend the school within the student's attendance zone; or

b. In the case of high school students only, if academic courses are taught in the receiving school which are not available at the school in the student's attendance zone.

4. If one of the conditions of paragraph 2 above is met, the transfer must meet the following criteria:

a. The transfer is requested in writing by the student's parent or legal guardian;

b. The transfer receives the approval of both the sending and receiving principals;

c. The receiving school has adequate space; and

d. The transfer is approved by the Superintendent.

Transfers shall be for one year only. Transfer students must reapply annually. Students who attend schools outside their attendance zone must provide their own transportation and are subject to transfer back to the school in which they reside when space is no longer available.

The receiving school shall receive all information required by O.C.G.A. §§ 15-11-37 and 20-2-670. The transferring student shall be subject to discipline of the prior

school. After examination of the student's disciplinary records, the receiving principal in his sole discretion may refuse to accept the transferring student. Any student who is attending school out of zone and who commits any infraction of the receiving school's disciplinary code or the disciplinary code of the Dougherty County School System may be transferred back to the school to which such student is zoned. The principal of the receiving school in which the disciplinary infraction is made shall have the sole authority to transfer a student back to the school in which the student is zoned.

Transfers to out-of-zone schools shall not be for the purpose of participating in extracurricular activities, athletics, or musical performance groups.

A provided in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-290, if the school in which a student is assigned does not have available permanent classroom space in which the student can attend classes and a school within the district in which the student resides has permanent classroom space available, the parents or legal guardians of the student may request reassignment to the second school.

The Superintendent of the Dougherty County School System is authorized to provide for transfers consistent with this policy. Any party aggrieved by the decision of the Superintendent may appeal the Superintendent's decision to the Dougherty County Board of Education. The request for an appeal must be in writing and shall distinctly set forth the reasons the Superintendent's construction or administration of a request for transfer is inconsistent with this policy. The Board shall not consider for requests for transfers not complying with this policy.

Limited Public School Choice

A. Definitions.

1. Excessive travel time and distance.

a. The actual transportation time one way (on a school bus) to the school where the student has been assigned takes 45 minutes longer than the transportation time (on a school bus) to the closer school where the student wants to be reassigned; or

b. The actual transportation distance one way (via the school bus route) to the school where the student has been assigned is at least 15 miles farther than the distance to the closer school where the student wants to be reassigned.

2. Notification of a student's assignment – annual establishment of school attendance zones by the local board of education.

B. Requirements.

1. With the approval of the Dougherty County Board of Education, a student may be reassigned to another school within the district if all of the following conditions of this subsection 1 are met:

- a. The school to which the student has been assigned does not have available permanent classroom space, and the student is assigned to nonpermanent classroom facilities for instruction.
- b. Another school within the district where the student resides has permanent classroom space available.
- c. The parent or guardian of the student has submitted a written request to the Dougherty County Board of Education asking for the student to be reassigned to a school where permanent classroom space is available.
- d. The parent or guardian assumes responsibility for providing transportation for the student if a request for reassignment is granted by the School Board.

2. With the approval of both the sending school board and the Dougherty County Board of Education, a student may be reassigned from another school district to a school in the Dougherty County School District if all of the following conditions of this subsection 2 are met:

- a. A school in the Dougherty County School System is closer to the student's place of residence than the school to which the student has been assigned.
- b. The actual transportation time or distance on a bus one way to the school where the student has been assigned is determined to be excessive in terms of travel time or distance as defined in item A of this policy.
- c. The school to which the student is requesting reassignment is offering an instructional program comparable to that offered in the school where the student was originally assigned.

d. The school in the Dougherty County School District to which the student is requesting reassignment has available permanent classroom space.

e. The parent or guardian assumes responsibility for providing transportation for the student.

f. The Dougherty County Board of Education shall establish and annually publish the school attendance zones for the school system. The parent or guardian of a student eligible to request reassignment shall submit written requests each year to the local board of education for the school where the student wishes to be reassigned and to the local board of education where the student resides by no later than seven days following the publication of attendance zones. The responsible local boards of education shall respond to the requesting parent or guardian within 30 days of receipt of the request for reassignment.

3. If both local boards of education agree to the reassignment, the state and federal funds earned by those students allotted to the sending school system shall be re-allotted to the receiving school system.

4. The Dougherty County School System may elect to receive any part or all of the local five mil share directly from the sending school system correlated to the number of transferred students.

5. The school system, upon receiving students pursuant to this policy, may apply to the state for reimbursement in an amount equal to the difference between the dollar amount per full-time equivalent student represented by the state program funds received and the total dollar amount per full-time equivalent student expended by the system for a similarly enrolled student (excluding transportation costs).

6. If the sending school board and the Dougherty County Board of Education are unable to reach a satisfactory agreement regarding a request to reassign a student to another school, the parent or guardian may request an appeal of the decision(s) made by the local board(s) of education. Such appeal shall comply with the procedures set out in O.C.G.A. §20-2-1160 and State Board of Education Rule 160-1-3-.04 School Law Tribunals and Appeals.

7. Nothing contained in this policy shall be construed to interfere with desegregation plans in effect in the Dougherty County School System.

Student Mobility

One of the greatest challenges faced by the Dougherty County School System is the high mobility rate of its students. Moving from school to school places a tremendous burden on students as they try to adjust to a different setting, a different teacher or teachers, and different classmates. For teachers, constantly changing faces in the classroom mean taking two steps forward and one step back nearly every day. What does this new student need? Is this student on track? If not, what can I do to help?

Beginning with the 2007-2008 school year, students will remain in the school where they enrolled at the beginning of the year for the entire school year, provided they are attending their zoned school at the beginning of the year. In the event they are out of zone at the beginning of the year, they will be placed in their appropriate school. Transportation will be provided

Student Behavior Code (JCDA)

Bullying

“Bullying” of a student by another student shall be prohibited in Dougherty County Schools. As used in this section, the term “bullying” means:

- i. Any willful attempt to threaten to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; or
- ii. Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediately bodily harm

Any student in grades six through twelve who has twice been found to have committed the offense of bullying within a single school year, shall, upon being charged with committing the offense of bullying a third time be brought before the Dougherty County School Disciplinary Tribunal. Upon a finding that a student has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, such student shall be assigned to the alternative school.

Students and parents of students shall be notified of the prohibition against bullying, and the penalties for violating the prohibition by:

- i. Including the prohibition in the student code of conduct for middle and high schools;
- ii. Posting such information at each middle and high school; and
- iii. Including such information in student and parent handbooks.

Terroristic Threats Policy

It is the policy of the Dougherty County Board of Education to take all reasonable and necessary steps to provide a safe environment for students, staff, faculty, and administration. Any threat by any individual, group of individuals, or organization of any kind directed toward another which, if carried out, would pose a potential danger to the safety of students, staff, faculty, or administration will be regarded as a serious matter and will be treated accordingly. The Dougherty County Board of Education will not tolerate terroristic threats made against anyone in the school community.

A. A student commits the offense of a terroristic threat when a student threatens to commit any crime of violence or to burn, damage, or destroy property with the purpose of terrorizing another or causing the evacuation of a school building, place of assembly, athletic facility, school bus, or otherwise causing serious public inconvenience, or in reckless disregard of the risk of causing such terror or inconvenience. Any student found guilty of terroristic threats shall be subject to expulsion from the Dougherty County System as provided in Policy JDD/JDE.

B. It shall be a violation of the policies of the Dougherty County School System for any person knowingly to furnish or disseminate through a computer or computer network any picture, photograph, or drawing, or similar visual representation, or any verbal description of any information, designed to encourage, solicit, otherwise promote terroristic acts as defined in paragraph A of this policy. Any student found guilty of the offense established in this policy shall be subject to expulsion from the Dougherty County School System as provided in Policy JDD/JDE.

C. Any student who receives information concerning a terroristic threat or the dissemination of information regarding a terroristic threat must immediately report such information to a school administrator or other employee in a position of authority and/or the Dougherty County School

System Police Officer. The failure of a student to report such information may be treated as a disciplinary matter and may subject the student to whatever penalty as may be determined by the Student Disciplinary Tribunal of the Dougherty County School System.

D. Any employee of the School System who receives information concerning a terroristic threat or the dissemination of information about a terroristic threat shall take appropriate action to respond to the threat and take immediate steps to protect the safety of students, staff, and faculty. After taking necessary steps to protect students, staff, and faculty, an employee must immediately report the threat to the school administrator and/or Dougherty County School System Police Officer. Failure to report a terroristic threat shall be ground for discipline up to and including dismissal from the Dougherty County School System.

E. The school administrator and/or the Dougherty County School System Police Officer shall first take immediate steps to protect the safety of the students, staff, and faculty of the school. If satisfied that the immediate threat has been abated, the principal or school administrator shall immediately contact the School Superintendent. Failure of the school administrator to report a terroristic threat as defined in Paragraph A may result in discipline up to and including dismissal.

F. Principals are instructed to include appropriate notice in student and staff handbooks indicating that all threats of violence will be taken seriously and urging students and staff to report all such threats to school administrators. Principals shall post at the school a notice indicating that all threat of violence will be taken seriously and will subject the offender to disciplinary action by the School System and criminal prosecution.

Reporting of Disruptive Students

The Dougherty County Board of Education requires, pursuant to O.C.G.A. §20-2-735, the filing of a report by a teacher who has knowledge that a student has exhibited behavior that repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in the teacher's class or with the ability of such student's classmates to learn, where such behavior is in violation of the student code of conduct. Such report shall be filed with the principal or the principal's designee within one school day of the most recent occurrence of such behavior, shall not exceed one page, and shall describe the

behavior. The principal or the principal's designee shall, within one school day after receiving such a report from a teacher, send to the student's parents or guardian a copy of the report and information regarding how the student's parents or guardian may contact the principal or the principal's designee.

If student support services are utilized or if disciplinary action is taken in response to such a report by the principal or the principal's designee, the principal or the principal's designee shall send written notification to the teacher and the student's parents or guardian of the student support services being utilized or the disciplinary action taken within one school day after such utilization or action and shall make a reasonable attempt to confirm that such written notification has been received by the student's parents or guardian. Such written notification shall include information regarding how the student's parents or guardian may contact the principal or the principal's designee.

Procedures for Removal of Disruptive Student from Class (JCD)

It is the policy of the Dougherty County School System that a teacher shall have the authority to manage his or her classroom, discipline students, and refer a student to the principal or the principal's designees to maintain discipline in the classroom. The principal or the principal's designee shall respond when a student is referred by a teacher by employing appropriate discipline management techniques that are consistent with the policies of the Dougherty County Board of Education.

A teacher shall have the right to remove from class a student who repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in the class or with the ability of the student's classmates to learn, where the student's behavior is in violation of the student code of conduct, provided that the teacher has previously filed a report with the principal or the principal's designee or provided that the teacher determines that such behavior of the student poses an immediate threat to the safety of the student's classmates or the teacher.

The teacher shall file a report with the principal or the principal's designee describing the student's behavior, in one page or less, by the end of the school day on which such removal occurs or at the beginning of the next school day. The principal or the principal's designee shall, within one school day after the student's

removal from class, send to the student's parents or guardian written notification:

- that the student was removed from class,
- a copy of the report filed by the teacher, and
- information regarding how the student's parents or guardian may contact the principal or the principal's designee.

If a teacher removes a student from class, the principal or the principal's designee shall discuss the matter with the teacher and the student by the end of the school day on which such removal occurs or at the beginning of the next school day. The principal or the principal's designee shall give the student oral or written notice of the grounds for removal from class and, if the student denies engaging in such conduct, the principal or the principal's designee shall explain the evidence which supports removal from class and give the student an opportunity to present explanation of the situation. If, after such discussions, the principal or the principal's designee seeks to return the student to the teacher's class and the teacher gives consent, the student shall be returned to the class, and principal or the principal's designee may take action to discipline the student, as may be warranted. If, after such discussions, the principal or the principal's designee seeks to return the student to the teacher's class and the teacher withholds consent to the student's return to class, the principal or the principal's designee shall determine an appropriate temporary placement for the student by the end of the first school day following such removal and shall also take steps to convene a meeting of a placement review committee. The placement review committee shall convene by the end of the second school day following such removal by the teacher and shall issue a decision by the end of the third school day following such removal by the teacher. An appropriate temporary placement for the student shall be a placement that, in the judgment of the principal or the principal's designee, provides the least interruption to the student's education and reflects other relevant factors, including but not limited to, the severity of the behavior that was the basis for the removal, the student's behavior history, the student's need for support services, and the available education settings; provided, however, that the student shall not be returned to the class of the teacher who removed him or her, as an appropriate temporary placement, unless the teacher gives consent. The temporary placement shall be in effect from the time of removal until the decision of the placement review committee is issued, or, if applicable, a placement determination is made.

There shall be established at each school one or more placement review committees, each of which is to be composed of three members, to determine the placement of a student when a teacher withholds consent to the return of a student to the teacher's class. For each committee established, the faculty shall choose two teachers to serve as members and one teacher to serve as an alternate member, and the principal shall choose one member of the professional staff of the school to serve as a member. The teacher withholding consent to readmit the student may not serve on the committee. The placement review committee shall have the authority to: (1) return the student to the teacher's class upon determining that such placement is the best alternative or the only available alternative, or (2) refer the student to the principal or the principal's designee for appropriate action. The decision of the placement review committee shall be in writing and shall be made within three school days after the teacher withholds consent to the return of a student.

The Dougherty County Board of Education shall provide training for members of placement review committees regarding the provisions of the law, including procedural requirements, local board policies relating to student discipline, and the student code of conduct that is applicable to the school.

If a placement review committee decides to return a student to a class from which he or she was removed, the principal or the principal's designee shall implement such decision of the placement review committee. In addition, the principal or the principal's designee may, consistent with any applicable procedural requirements of the Constitution of the United States and this state and after considering the use of any appropriate student support services, take any of the following actions which are authorized as a response to the alleged violation of the student code of conduct by local board policies pursuant to O.C.G.A. *20-2-735:

1. Place the student in in-school suspension;
2. Impose out-of-school suspension for not more than 10 school days, including any time during which the student was subject to out-of-school suspension after his or her removal from class; or
3. Make another disciplinary decision recommendation consistent with local board policy.

If a placement review committee decides not to return a student to a class from which he/she was removed, the principal or the principal's designee shall

implement such decision of the placement review committee. In addition, the principal or the principal's designee shall determine an appropriate placement for the student and may take action to discipline the student in a manner consistent with any applicable procedural requirements of the Constitution of the United States and this state and after considering the use of any appropriate student support services, as follows, provided that the placement or disciplinary action is authorized as a response to the alleged violation of the student code of conduct by Board of Education policy:

1. Place the student into another appropriate classroom, in-school suspension, or an alternative education program;
2. Impose out-of-school suspension for not more than 10 school days, including any time during which the student was subject to out-of-school suspension after his or her removal from class;
3. Make another placement or disciplinary decision or recommendation consistent with local board policy; or
4. Implement or recommend any appropriate combination of the above and return the student to the class from which he or she was removed upon the completion of any disciplinary or placement action taken.

Within one school day of taking action, the principal or the principal's designee shall send written notification of such action to the teacher and the parents or guardian of the student and shall make a reasonable attempt to confirm that such written notification has been received by the student's parents or guardian.

Parents or guardian or a student who has been removed from class pursuant to the law may be required to participate in conferences that may be requested by the principal or the principal's designee; provided, however, that a student may not be penalized for the failure of his or her parents or guardian to attend such a conference.

Corporal Punishment (JDA)

Reasonable discipline may include the administration of corporal punishment to a student, subject to the following requirements:

1. The corporal punishment shall not be excessive or unduly severe.
2. Corporal punishment shall never be used as a first line of punishment for

misbehavior unless the pupil was informed beforehand that specific misbehavior could occasion its use; provided, however, that corporal punishment may be employed as a first line of punishment for those acts of misconduct which are so antisocial or disruptive in nature as to shock the conscience.

3. Corporal punishment must be administered in the presence of a principal or assistant principal, or the designee of the principal or assistant principal, employed by the Board of Education authorizing such punishment, and the other principal or assistant principal must be informed beforehand and in the presence of the pupil of the reason for the punishment.

4. After an explanation of the student's misconduct, if the teacher administers corporal punishment in the form of spanking, must be in the presence of the principal or designee.

5. The principal or teacher who administered corporal punishment must provide the child's parent, upon request, a written explanation of the reasons for the punishment and the name of the principal or assistant principal, or designee of the principal or assistant principal, who was present; provide, however, that such an explanation shall not be used as evidence in any subsequent civil action brought as the result of said corporal punishment.

6. Corporal punishment shall not be administered to a child whose parents or legal guardian have upon the day of enrollment of the pupil filed with the principal of the school a statement from a medical doctor licensed in Georgia stating that it is detrimental to the child's mental or emotional stability.

Student Reporting of Acts of Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct

Any student (*or parent or friend of a student*) who has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator, or other school system employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor, or administrator at his/her school.

Any teacher, counselor or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school principal or principal's designee, and shall submit a written report of the incident to the school principal or principal's designee within 24 hours. *If the principal is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee.*

Any school principal or principal's designee receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 shall make an oral report immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a report in writing, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney.

Reports of acts of sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator, or other employee not covered by O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 or 20-2-1184 shall be investigated immediately by school or system personnel. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the school principal or principal's designee shall make an immediate written report to the superintendent and the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division.

"Sexual abuse" means a person's employing, using, persuading, inducing, enticing, or coercing any minor who is not that person's spouse to engage in any sexual act as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5.

"Sexual misconduct" includes behavior by an educator that is directed at a student and intended to sexually arouse or titillate the educator or the child. Sexual misconduct by an educator may include, but is not limited to, the following behaviors:

- Making sexual comments, jokes or gestures
- Showing or displaying sexual pictures, photographs, illustrations, or messages
- Writing sexual messages/graffiti on notes or the internet

- Spreading sexual rumors (i.e., saying a student is gay or a lesbian)
- Spying on students as they dress, shower, or use the restroom at school
- Flashing or “mooning” students
- Touching, excessively hugging, or grabbing students in a sexual way
- Forcing a student to kiss him/her or doing something else of a sexual nature
- Talking or asking about a student’s developing body, sexuality, dating habits, etc.
- Talking repeatedly about sexual activities or sexual fantasies
- Making fun of a student’s body parts
- Calling students sexual names

Conflict of Interest (GAG)

No employee of the Dougherty County Board of Education shall engage in or have a financial interest, directly or indirectly, in any activity that conflicts or raises a reasonable question of conflict with duties and responsibilities in the Dougherty County School System. Staff members shall not engage in any type of private business during school time or on school property. Staff members shall not utilize school materials, inventory, or any other item owned by the School System in the conduct of a private business. Staff members shall not purchase items for private use in conjunction with orders for materials or services purchased by the School System. Any discounts received on purchases made on behalf of the School System shall accrue to the benefit of the School System and not staff members. No staff members shall use their position with the School System to influence any business transaction in which the system is not a party. Employees shall not engage in work of any type where the information concerning customer, client, or employer originates from any information available to the employee through school sources. All employees shall execute and comply with a Standards of Conduct Certification as provided in GAGE.

Dress Code for School Personnel (GBRI-1)

Staff choices concerning dress send clear messages to our colleagues, our students, and our community. It is important that those choices speak to a high level of professionalism. In order to present the most professional appearance, we expect our female personnel to wear dresses, suits, full-length slacks, skirts, and blouses. Pants that are no shorter than mid-calf are allowed if they are not form fitting. Sleeveless outer garments may be worn as long as under garments are not visible. No tank tops are to be worn. Dresses and skirts may not be more than two inches above the knee. Hosiery is optional when wearing slacks or long dresses and skirts.

Male personnel are expected to wear suits or slacks with a shirt and tie except in the case where a teacher works in a lab and/or around machinery where ties would be a safety hazard. Socks must be worn.

Professional, safe, and non-distracting footwear is expected. Athletic shoes may not be worn unless prescribed by a physician.

Sweat pants or sweat shirts and any form fitting apparel shall not be permitted. Jeans and t-shirts will only be permitted on designated workdays or on special days approved by the principal/supervisor. Holiday attire will be permitted.

Exception is made for physical education personnel who may wear shorts no more than two inches above the knee and athletic shoes.

If the building administrator/supervisor deems an employee is dressed inappropriately, he/she will be asked to change clothes.

Teacher Retirement

An employee who is entitled by state law to participate in the Georgia Teachers Retirement System is required to become a member immediately upon employment. A deduction of 5 percent will be made from his/her salary as a contribution for retirement purposes. The school system also contributes an amount for the employees. If an employee does not continue to work until retirement, he/she may apply for withdrawal of all contributions as soon as the last paycheck is received and termination forms have been processed in the Human Resources Office. Forms for membership and for withdrawal may be obtained from the Human Resources Department. The system's participation is 9.24% of salary.

Public School Employee Retirement System

Membership in the Public School Employees Retirement System (PSERS) consists of all employees of public school systems who are not eligible for membership in the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia (TRS). Specifically, all school bus drivers, food service employees, maintenance or custodial personnel are members of PSERS. Certain managers, supervisors, and directors in food service and maintenance are eligible for TRS membership. **No employee may be a member of both PSERS and TRS at the same time.**

Social Security

All Dougherty County School System employees must participate in the Social Security Program. 6.2% is deducted monthly from each employee's gross salary and the Dougherty County Board of Education contributes an equal amount.

Medicare

In January 1991, Medicare was separated from Social Security. All Dougherty County Board of Education employees must participate in Medicare. 1.45% is deducted monthly from each employee's gross salary and the Dougherty County Board of Education contributes an equal amount.

Local Supplements

All certified employees of the Dougherty County School System are paid supplements. Supplements in the Dougherty County School System for the 2007-2008 school year are included in the published Salary Guide available on the DCSS web site at <http://www.docoschools.org/dpms/PDFs/HUM/salaryguide.pdf>

Employment Benefits

The Dougherty County School System offers benefits to employees under Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code. This is also referred to as a "Cafeteria Plan". Under the Cafeteria Plan, Section 125, employees are allowed to pay many of their premium expenses with "before tax" dollars instead of "after tax" dollars. Changes to your benefits plan can only be made at open enrollment once a year or within thirty days of a qualifying event, such as marriage, divorce, birth, adoption, etc.

Employees taking a leave of absence without pay should contact the Benefits Office for instructions and information on continuing coverage during the leave of absence period.

New employees must sign up for coverage within the first 31 days of employment. If they do not elect coverage during this time, they must wait for the next "open enrollment" period or have a qualifying event. During open enrollment, an employee may add, delete, or make changes to their selected coverage. The open enrollment period is generally a 30-day period around October/November of each year. Benefits changes made during open enrollment become effective on January 1 following enrollment.

Benefits offered to Dougherty County School System employees are:

State Health Insurance

Worker's Compensation

Flexible Spending Benefit Plan

Voluntary Term and Dependent Life Insurance

Universal Life Insurance

Board Paid Life Insurance

Dental Benefits

Vision Insurance

Cancer Insurance

Short and Long Term Disability Insurance

Sick Leave Bank

Tax Sheltered Annuities

State Health Insurance

A group health insurance plan is available to all eligible personnel.

Eligible employees are all employees except those included in the following categories:

- Employees who are employed less than half time.
- Employees who are classified as substitutes or temporary employees.

For eligible employees, coverage goes into effect on the first day of the calendar month following one full calendar month of service.

Employees eligible for health insurance coverage can choose from four plan options. A PPO Option (Preferred Provider Organization), a PPO Choice Plan, an Indemnity Option and an HMO (not available in Albany, but available in surrounding areas).

Employee premium rates vary by plan and selected coverage. The state of Georgia and local school systems also make substantial contributions toward the cost of this program.

Employees should contact the Benefits Office (431-1260) for information concerning eligibility, coverage options, and costs of coverage.

Worker's Compensation

The Dougherty County Board of Education as your employer pays 100% of the cost of worker's compensation benefits as long as the correct procedures are followed. If you receive an injury arising out of and in the course of your employment with the Dougherty County School System, you should report the accident/injury to your supervisor immediately. If your injury prevents you from doing so, then you should ask someone to do it for you. Your failure to report the accident/injury within a certain time period could jeopardize your rights to receive your benefits or could cause a delay in receiving them. Should you need treatment for your injury, a panel of doctors is posted at your work site. You have a right to select one of the medical doctors from the panel of physicians. Your supervisor or personnel in the benefits office will assist you in receiving the necessary medical treatment. If treatment at an emergency room becomes necessary, follow-up care must be provided by a panel physician. The Dougherty County Board of Education is not

responsible for charges for medical services or treatment if you seek medical services from other than one of the approved physicians. Please call the Benefits Office at 431-1260 if you need assistance in locating an approved panel physician.

Benefits Package Information School System Web Site

Go to our web site (www.docoschools.org) to find out more information about the benefits package. Click on **Intranet**, then on **Benefits Center**; both the user name and password are DOUGHERTY. Next click Employee Benefits. Choose from the list to get the information you need (ex. via video, claim forms, benefits summary and frequently asked questions).

Board Paid Life Insurance Policy

The Dougherty County School System has chosen to provide each eligible full-time employee with Basic Life Insurance coverage through MetLife in the amount of \$15,000 at no cost to the employee.

Credit Union

Membership is offered to all Dougherty County personnel through the DOCO Federal Credit Union. Contact the Credit Union at 435-1715 for more information.

Supplemental Retirement

Public School Employee Retirement (PSER) VALIC—Thomas Heidt—Agent (229) 881-4681.

This plan allows employees who are not eligible for Teacher's Retirement to supplement their retirement funds. 1% comes from the employee's base salary and the DCSS supplements that with 3% matching funds.

There is 100% vesting of the employee amount and a 5-year vesting of DCSS amounts.

Sick Leave Bank

The Dougherty County School System Sick Leave Bank is available for all benefits eligible contributing employees to utilize after all leave (including vacation) has been exhausted.

To become a member of the Sick Leave Bank the employee must contribute one day of accumulated sick leave. Employees may become members during their first thirty-one (31) days of employment or during an annual open enrollment period. The one contributed day is not refundable or transferable.

The committee of Trustees will determine if and when additional days need to be assessed from all SLB members in order to replenish the bank. All active members of the SLB shall be notified when additional days are to be deposited to the Sick Leave Bank.

In order to draw days from the SLB, a member must have made the appropriate contribution. All requests to withdraw days from the SLB shall be filed with the Leave Clerk on the Sick Leave Bank Withdrawal Form. This form will also be accompanied by the Physician's Statement form verifying illness and attesting to the individual's incapacity to perform assigned duties.

The Sick Leave Bank must be used for the employee's personal illness or disability only. It cannot be used when the employee is absent to care for a family member.

The member must be enrolled in the SLB for ninety (90) calendar days from the effective date to be eligible. The member must be absent due to illness at least twenty (20) consecutive workdays immediately prior to the use of Sick Leave Bank days. The waiting period will not be waived, and Sick Leave Bank days will not be granted retroactively.

Leave grants from the bank may be approved in amounts not to exceed twenty (20) consecutive work days. Applicants may submit requests for an extension of ten (10) days before their prior grant expires. The maximum number of days any member may received in any fiscal year is thirty.

Family and Medical Leave Act

The Family and Medical Leave Act is a federal law enacted in 1993. The Act provides qualifying employees of covered employers with up to twelve weeks of job protected, unpaid leave annually for certain qualifying absences.

Employees of DCSS are required to use their paid leave concurrent with FMLA leave. The rolling year will be used to track FMLA leave.

To be a qualifying employee you must have been employed by the Dougherty County School System for 12 months and have worked 1,250 hours during the 12

month period preceding the start of FMLA-qualifying leave.

The qualifying reasons are:

- The birth of a child, or placement, or adoption of a child and bonding time with the child.
- To care for a family member (parent, spouse, child) with a serious health condition
- For your own serious health condition (SHC) that renders you unable to perform the essential functions of your job.

Thirty day notice is required for foreseeable leave.

To avoid loss of insurance coverage during FMLA leave employees are responsible for paying their insurance premiums **once the leave becomes unpaid.**

For more detailed information on your rights under the act you can contact the Benefits Office at (229) 431-1260, or you can access the Department of Labor's web site at <http://www.dol.gov/esa/whd/fmla>.

Donated Leave

Employees may be granted donated sick leave **for critical or life threatening conditions only** for a maximum of 40 working days. An employee receiving donated sick leave shall have exhausted all other available leave, including vacation and sick leave bank. Questions regarding donated leave should be directed to the Benefits Office at (229) 431-1260.

Leaves and Absences

Professional Leave (GBRH)

Extended Professional Leave

Professional Personnel Sick Leave (GBRIB)

Classified Personnel Sick Leave (GCRGB)

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Family and Medical Leave (GBRIG) Eligibility

Amount of Leave Available

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Professional Leave (GBRH)

Personnel may formally request professional leave at full pay to attend specific activities or receive advanced training. Examples of reasons for which professional leave may be granted include, but are not limited to, in-service training and for purposes of attending meetings of professional associations.

The formal request should be approved by the immediate supervisor and the appropriate Deputy or Executive Director two weeks prior to the requested absence.

Extended Professional Leave

Extended professional leave for a period of one year may be granted by the Board of Education for the purpose of pursuing further educational opportunities. Such leave may only be granted under the following conditions:

1. That the employee is tenured.
2. That the employee submits a written request to the Superintendent countersigned by the principal prior to the end of the school year immediately preceding the year for which the leave is requested. Such request must include the name of the college or university to be attended.
3. That the employee shall carry not less than the number of hours required of a full-time student enrolled at the institution taking graduate work for an advanced degree.
4. That the employee shall notify the Superintendent not later than May 1 of the desire to return the following year. The employee shall be entitled to return in his/her same or substantially equivalent position in the system.
5. That such leave shall not affect an employee's tenure status.
6. That such leave shall be without pay.
7. Employee may be granted one renewal not to exceed one year

Professional Personnel Sick Leave (GBRIB)

Sick leave is granted to professional employees for absence due to personal illness or injury or to illness or death in the employee's immediate family. Sick leave is granted on the basis of one and one-fourth working days for each completed

contract month. Employees on 10-month contracts shall earn twelve and one-half days per year; employees on 11-month contracts shall earn thirteen and three-fourth days and employees on twelve-month contracts shall earn fifteen days per year. Sick leave is not to be considered as annual leave except that a maximum of three days may be used for personal reasons each year:

(a) Cumulative Sick Leave -- Any unused portion of sick leave in a school year may be accumulated up to a maximum of 90 days. Three days personal leave may not be accumulated.

(b) Illness in the Immediate Family -- A maximum of ten days of sick leave may be used in case of serious illness in the immediate family such as husband, wife, child, mother, father, sister, brother, or such in-laws or relative living under the same roof.

(c) Death in the Immediate Family -- In the event of death in the immediate family, such as husband, wife, child, mother, father, sister, brother, or such in-laws, or relative living under the same roof, a maximum of **five** days will be granted.

(d) Certificate from Physician for Sick Leave -- The principal of the school in which the employee works shall certify whether the employee's absence meets requirements of sick leave. The principal shall have the right to require a doctor's certificate regarding the employee's illness if deemed necessary.

(e) First Year Teacher -- First year teachers will be credited with twelve and one-half (12.5) days of sick leave at the beginning of the school year. Any teacher employed after the beginning of the school year shall be credited with the number of days that would be earned during the remainder of that year. In the event of separation of service prior to the end of the school year, an amount sufficient to cover used sick leave not earned by the employee shall be deducted from the regular salary.

(f) In the event of pregnancy, a teacher should report her condition to her principal as soon as possible so that a substitute can be arranged. Maternity leave may be granted and a teacher may use her accumulated sick leave for the period of disability caused by the pregnancy. Sick leave may be used only during the period of actual physical disability. The length of the leave and the date of commencement to be agreed upon by the

teacher and her physician and sufficient notice given to the principal. Maternity leave which extends beyond the period of physical disability shall terminate at one of the following times: end of the Christmas holidays, end of the first semester or the beginning of the following year.

(g) Deduction for Absences not Covered -- For each day absent from duty in excess of allowable sick leave, or for any cause not covered by sick leave provisions 1/190th of the annual salary will be deducted. In the event of separation from service before the end of the contract year, the Board will deduct from the teacher's regular salary the amount due at the rate of 1/190th per day to recover the sick leave not earned by the teacher.

(h) Teachers may not take personal leave during makeup or staff days or prior to or following a holiday unless there is an emergency or there are extenuating circumstances. Such requests must be recommended by the principal and approved by the appropriate Executive Director.

(i) A full-time employee may be granted extended sick leave without pay for a period of one year under the following conditions:

1. That the employee submits a written request to the Superintendent countersigned by the principal or immediate supervisor prior to the end of the school year immediately preceding the year for which the leave is requested.
2. That the employee shall notify the Superintendent no later than May 1 of the desire to return the following year. The employee shall be entitled to return to the same or substantially equivalent position in the system.
3. That such leave shall not affect a teacher's tenure status.
4. That such leave shall be without pay.
5. Employees may be granted **one** renewal not to exceed one year.

The Board shall pay all substitute teachers. A teacher is never to pay a substitute teacher.

Classified Personnel Sick Leave (GCRGB)

Sick leave is granted to all full-time employees for absence due to personal illness or injury, or due to illness or death in the employee's immediate family. Sick leave is earned at the rate of one and a quarter (1.25) days times the number of months worked each school year for monthly employees and .05 hours times the number of hours paid per payday for hourly employees. Temporary employees or employees who work less than half-time are not eligible to earn sick leave. All employees may accumulate ninety (90) days.

The principal or supervisor shall certify whether the employee's absence meets requirements of sick leave. The principal or supervisor shall have the right to require a doctor's certificate regarding the employee's illness if such certificate is deemed necessary.

In addition to sick leave for personal illness or injury, an employee may use sick leave for absences due to the following reasons:

- (a) Illness in the Immediate Family -- A maximum of ten days may be used in case of serious illness in the immediate family such as husband, wife, child, mother, father, sister, brother, or such in-laws, or relative living under the same roof.
- (b) Death in the Immediate Family -- In the event of death in the immediate family, such as husband, wife, child, mother, father, sister, brother, or such in-laws, or relative living under the same roof, a maximum of five days will be granted.

Sick leave is not to be considered as annual leave except that a maximum of three days may be used for personal leave.

Docked Pay

Employees absent for other than approved reasons or absent after sick leave has been exhausted shall have the following dockages:

- a. 180-Day Contract Calendar (Bus Drivers) -- 1/180th of annual salary for each day's absence not covered by sick leave.
- b. 190-Day Contract Calendar (Teachers) -- 1/190th of annual salary for each day's absence not covered by sick leave.

- c. 210-Day Contract Calendar -- 1/210th of annual salary for each day's absence not covered by sick leave.
- d. 220-Day Contract Calendar -- 1/220th of annual salary for each day's absence not covered by sick leave.
- e. Twelve-Month Employees -- 1/250th of annual salary for each day's absence not covered by sick leave.
- f. Other -- A dockage of one average day's pay will be made for each day of overage. An average day's pay will be calculated based on number of days employed.

Personal Leave

Three days of sick leave may be used for personal leave provided the employee has enough accumulated sick leave days/hours to cover the amount of personal leave requested. Approval of the supervisor is necessary prior to the date of planned absence; however, the employee is not required to disclose the specific purpose for the leave. Personal leave may not be taken when the presence of the employee is considered essential for effective school/school system operation. Teachers may not take personal leave the day before or after a student holiday or during make-up or staff days. Personal leave may not be accumulated.

Classes During Work Hours

One-fourth of a day is the minimum amount of time that can be taken as personal leave. Employees are not to be released during the workday to attend classes.

Exception: If the employee's supervisor or principal approves the employee's work release the last 30 minutes of the day and arrangements are made to make up this time. This is a building administrator/supervisor's decision.

Maternity Leave

In the event an employee becomes pregnant, she should report her condition to her supervisor as soon as possible so that a substitute can be arranged (where applicable). Maternity leave may be granted and an employee may use up to six weeks of accumulated sick leave for the period of disability caused by the pregnancy. Sick leave may be used only during the period of actual physical disability. If after six weeks the employee must remain out, a doctor's statement will be needed in order to use sick leave past the six weeks period.

Pregnant employees are allowed to continue working until an agreement is reached between the employee, her physician, and the school administrator upon a date to terminate her duties. The agreement will be based upon health factors.

Family and Medical Leave (GBRIG) Eligibility

Employees of the Dougherty County Board of Education who have been employed for 12 months or more and who worked at least 1250 hours during that time, are entitled to 12 weeks of unpaid leave per year in connection with:

- (1) the birth and first year care of a child;
- (2) the adoption or foster parent placement of a child;
- (3) the illness of an employee's spouse, child, or parent with respect to a serious health condition, defined as one that requires in-patient care in a hospital, hospice or residential medical care facility, or which requires continuing treatment by a health care provider;
- (4) the employee's own illness

In the instance of birth, adoption, and foster placement, the entitlement for child-care ends after (1) the child reaches the age of 1 year, or (2) twelve months after the adoption or placement.

Entitlement for leave associated with illness of a child occurs only where the child is under 18 years of age or incapable of self-care due to mental or physical disability.

Amount of Leave Available

In cases where both spouses are employed by the Dougherty County Board of Education, the combined amount of leave for childbirth, adoption, and family illness is limited to 12 weeks.

Notification of Anticipated Leave

Except where circumstances are such that reasonable advance planning is not possible, employees must provide the office of the Superintendent at least 30 days notice of the date when leave is to begin. With respect to foreseeable family or employee illness, the employee shall make reasonable effort to schedule treatment, including intermittent and reduced hour leave, so as not to disrupt

unduly the operations of the school district, subject to approval of the employee's or family member's health care provider.

Benefits

Benefits accrued by the employee before leave is taken will not be altered by the employee's absence under this policy. The employee is entitled to continuation of health benefits during the leave period. Upon return, the employee is entitled to restoration to an equivalent pay, benefits, and conditions of employment.

If an employee fails to return to work after the leave period has expired, the Board of Education may recover the health benefits premium expenditure extended to the employee during the leave period.

Required Certification

The Board of Education requires that a request for leave be supported by a certification issued by the appropriate health care provider of the eligible employee or of the son, daughter, spouse, or parent of the employee.

The certification shall include (1) the date that the condition commenced, (2) the duration, (3) the necessity for the employee's leave and (4) the employee's inability to perform job functions. The Board of Education reserves the right, at its own expense, to designate a second health care provider (other than a school district employee) to provide a second opinion. A third such opinion, should it be necessary, shall be binding.

Upon the employee's return to work, the school district may require the employee to provide certification by the employee's health care provider that the employee is able to resume work.

Special Provisions

If an employee begins leave under this policy within three weeks before the end of the academic term and the duration of the leave is greater than five working days, the Board of Education may require the employee to continue to take leave until the end of the term.

The Board of Education may deny coverage under this policy to an employee whose salary is in the highest 10% of the employees employed by the school district if such denial is necessary to prevent substantial and grievous economic injury to the District's operations.

The Superintendent shall make, keep, and preserve records showing compliance with the Family and Medical Leave Act and in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 and federal regulations.

Extended Sick Leave

A full-time employee may be granted extended sick leave without pay for a period of one year under the following conditions:

1. That the employee submits a written request to the Superintendent countersigned by the principal or immediate supervisor prior to the end of the school year immediately preceding the year for which the leave is requested.
2. That the employee shall notify the Superintendent not later than May 1 of desire to return the following year. The employee shall be entitled to return to same or substantially equivalent position in the system.
3. That such leave shall not affect a teacher's tenure status.
4. That such leave shall be without pay.
5. Employees may be granted one renewal not to exceed one year.

The Board shall pay all substitute teachers. A teacher is never to pay a substitute teacher.

Jury Duty (GBRIA)

1. Serving on Federal Jury
 - a. The Dougherty County School System cannot get an exemption from federal jury duty for its teachers; however, the teacher may request an exemption.
 - b. The federal jury pay is \$25 per day; in addition, the juror is paid travel if he/she serves out of the City of Albany.
 - c. Teachers may serve without a deduction in pay. Employees are allowed to keep their jury checks.
2. Serving on Superior Court of Dougherty County or City Court of Albany Juries.

a. Under Section 50-112 of the Georgia School Laws, any instructional or administrative personnel of a school who does not desire to serve upon juries shall notify commissioners of the county in which employee resides in writing to that effect, and thereupon the jury commissioners shall not place in the jury box. If the person's name is placed in the jury box and the employee is called to serve and does not wish to serve, the school system can no longer request exemption for that person.

b. If the person wishes to serve on a jury, the time will not be charged against personal, professional or sick leave.

Personnel Vacations (GCRH)

All twelve-month employees of the Dougherty County School Board shall earn vacation according to the number of years of continuous and creditable service rendered in this school system.

Fewer than five years of service -- leave earned at the rate of one day per month.

Five, but fewer than ten years of service -- leave earned at the rate of one and one-fourth days per month.

Ten or more years of service -- leave earned at the rate of one and one-half days per month.

A year of creditable service shall be based on the fiscal year and shall be defined as not less than one day more than one-half of a complete year of service.

Full-time, continuous service rendered in a ten-month contractual position shall be considered as continuous service in determining creditable service for leave purposes. Total accrued vacation may not exceed thirty (30) days.

Certification

Professional Certification

Provisional Certification

Special Education Course Requirement (House Bill 1482)

Teaching of Reading Course

Renewable Certificates

Life Certificate

Paraprofessionals

Teacher Testing - Praxis II Calendar

Professional Certification

Every teacher in the Dougherty County Schools shall be certified by the Georgia Department of Education. To be eligible for a Georgia certificate one must graduate from a four-year accredited degree granting institution and have completed a required program in a teaching field including professional education courses.

Personnel needing certification should have the proper credentials processed through the Office of Human Resources.

The Georgia Department of Education currently uses three types of designations for professional certificates. They are Teaching (all teaching fields), Leadership (all leadership fields), and Service (i.e., counselor, school media specialist, school psychologist, visiting teachers, school social worker).

Classification: Category, Title, Type, Field, Level

(1) Certification is classified according to category, title, type, field and level. The commission has authorized the issuance of certificates under the following classification system:

CATEGORIES (2)

Renewable

Non-Renewable

TITLES (7)

Clear Renewable
Performance-Based (PB)

Non-Renewable Professional (N)
Intern (I)
International Exchange (X)
Life (D)
Wavier (W)

TYPES (6)

Teaching (T)
Service (S)
Leadership (L)
Paraprofessional (Para)
Technical Specialist (TS)
Permit (P)

(a) Certificates are grouped under two major categories, based upon requirements needed for continued certification. The categories are: Renewable and Non-Renewable. Renewable certificates are valid for 5 years, during which time the educator must satisfy standard renewal requirements outlined in Rule 505-2-.24. Non-Renewable certificate validity dates range from 1 to 3 years, depending on the title. During that validity period, the educator must satisfy requirements to convert the Non-Renewable to a Clear Renewable certificate.

(b) Titles of certificates identify the subcategories of certificates. The seven titles are:

1. **Clear Renewable:** This certificate indicates that all Special Georgia Requirements and other conditions have been met. The certificate is normally valid for 5 years (with exceptions outlined in Rule 505-2-.03) and standard renewal requirements apply. (Rule 505-2-.03)

2. **Performance-Based:** Performance-Based certificates were issued prior to 1990 under a performance-based evaluation system known as the Teacher Performance Assessment Instrument (TPAI). This title, which applies to most teaching fields and the service field of Speech and Language Pathology, remains in effect for certificates originally issued under the system. The certificate is valid for 5 years and standard renewal requirements apply. Performance-Based certificates are identified by the code letters "PB". (Rule 505-2-.09)

3. **Non-Renewable Professional:** This certificate recognizes initial preparation for certification in the field and is issued at the request for an employing school system under several different circumstances. These include, but are not limited to: former Georgia educators or out-of-state certificate holders who do not meet or exempt Special Georgia Requirements; professional certificate holders assigned to another field who do not meet all certificate requirements for the new field; applicants who have satisfied minimum content standards but must complete pedagogy and/or Special Georgia Requirements; and certificate holders who must obtain a higher degree level. During the validity period of the certificate, the individual must complete the specific requirements outlined in the PSC correspondence that accompanies the certificate. Non-renewable professional certificates are identified by the code letter "N". (Rule 505-2-.06)

4. Intern: This certificate is issued at the request of an employing school system to individuals accepted into the Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (TAPP). The initial certificate is issued for two years. The certificate may be issued for a third year based on the request of the employing school system and approval by the PSC. Intern certificates are non-renewable and are identified by the code letter "I". (Rule 505-2-.05)

5. International Exchange Certificate: This certificate is issued at the request of an employing school system to educators certified in other nations who wish to teach in Georgia schools for up to three years. These certificates are non-renewable and are identified by the code letter "X". (Rule 505-2-.08)

6. Life: Life certificates were issued prior to July 1, 1974 to educators eligible under requirements in place at that time. Once issued, the life status remains in effect without any renewal requirements for an unlimited time for the fields previously issued. No new life certificates shall be issued nor shall any new fields be added to life certificate holders with the life title. Considered non-renewable because no renewal requirements must be met, life certificates are identified by the code letter "D". (Rule 505-2-.09)

7. Waiver: At the request of an employing school system and at the discretion of the PSC, this certificate is issued to individuals who have not satisfied all certification requirements. Valid for a 1-year period, the Waiver certificate is non-renewable and is identified by the code letter "W". (Rule 505-2-.07)

(c) Types of certification identify six school personnel functions: teaching, service, leadership, paraprofessional, technical specialist (for selected Technology/Career Education fields only), and permitted personnel.

1. Teaching certificates are issued in fields that prepare an individual to teach the subject matter offered as a part of the school curriculum. These certificates are identified by the letter "T".

2. Service certificates are issued in fields that prepare an individual to provide support services to students, school personnel and school operations. These certificates are identified by the letter "S".

3. Leadership certificates are issued in fields that prepare an individual to administer or supervise a school system, school or school program. These certificates are identified by the letter “L”.

4. Paraprofessional certificates are issued to eligible individuals hired as paraprofessionals. The Paraprofessional certificate has no assigned level. These certificates are identified by the letters “PARA”.

5. Technical Specialist certificates are issued to eligible individuals in the Technology/Career Education areas of Trade & Industry Education and Healthcare Science & Technology Education. These certificates may be issued to individuals who hold high school diplomas/GED or Associate Degrees, as well as those with bachelor’s degrees or higher. See Rule 505-2-.39 for specific eligibility requirements. These certificates are identified by the letters “TS”.

6. Permits are issued at the request of an employing school system to individuals with specific experience in the teaching fields of performing arts (music, dance, drama), foreign language (for native speakers) and the educational leadership positions of superintendent. See Rulue 505-2-.10 for specific eligibility requirements. This certificate is identified by the letter “P”.

(d) Fields identified the specific teaching subject, service function, or leadership function authorized by the certificate. Georgia certificate fields are listed on the PSC web site at <http://www.gapsc.com>.

(e) The Level assigned to a certificate indicates the highest degree level recognized by the PSC that has been awarded to the certificate holder. College hours beyond a degree are not used to assign the level. Only the highest degree awarded on an official transcript from a PSC-accepted accredited institution is used to determine the single level that is assigned to all certificate fields held by that educator.

1. General requirements for recognizing certificate levels of education are:

(i) Level One—(Selected Technology/Career Education fields only) completion of a high school diploma or the GED equivalent.

(ii) Level Two—(Selected Technology/Career Education fields only) completion of an associate’s degree or one of the following options:

(I) 54 semester hours of acceptable college credit;

(II) a two-year program consisting of a minimum of 2,000 clock hours through a regionally accredited postsecondary vocational/technical school in the field in which certification is requested;

(III) a minimum of 27 semester hours of acceptable college credit or university credit and a minimum of 1,000 clock hours through an accredited vocational/technical school in the field in which certification is requested.

(iii) Level Four — completion of a bachelor's degree or the commission's determined degree equivalent.

(iv) Level Five — completion of a master's degree or the commission's determined degree equivalent.

(v) Level Six — completion of an education specialist's degree; completion of all requirements for a level seven doctoral degree except the dissertation and unconditional admission to candidacy; or the commission's determined degree equivalent.

(vi) Level Seven — completion of a Ph.D. or Ed.D. degree or the commission's determined degree equivalent.

2. The assignment of a certification level to various degrees is contingent on a valid certificate field being held and the degree being awarded on an official transcript from a PSC-accepted accredited institution (Rule 505-2-.22). Certificate levels that are assigned to various degrees and majors may be found on the PSC web site at <http://www.gapsc.com>.

3. Degrees with "doctoral" or "doctorate" or "master's" in the degree title are not automatically equivalent to a specific degree level and may result in a determination ranging from level four to level seven. The PSC is responsible for determining what level is assigned to a specific degree.

Special Education Course Requirement (House Bill 1482)

Any applicant renewing or applying for initial certification must have completed a course "in the identification and education of children who have special

educational needs." Applicants from out-of-state have two years from date of employment to complete the course. This course is offered through our system Staff Development Office.

Teaching of Reading Course

Applicants for initial certification or renewal in Elementary, Early Childhood, Middle Grades, English, and Special Education fields must take the Teaching of Reading Course. This course is offered through our Staff Development Office.

Renewable Certificates

The initial T-4, T-5 Georgia Teacher Certificate will be issued to an applicant based on the completion of a bachelor's or master's degree from an approved teacher education program prior to May 1, 1980. This certificate is valid for five years and may be renewed. Beginning July 1, 1983, those who teach grades kindergarten through fourth must hold an Early Childhood Certificate (P-5) and those teaching fourth through eights grade must hold a Middle Grades Certificate or have secondary certification (6-12) in the subject. Teachers holding a **LIFE** certificate are not required to convert.

Life Certificate

Life certificates were issued prior to July 1, 1974 to educators eligible under requirements in place at that time. Once issued, the life status remains in effect without any renewal requirements for an unlimited time for the fields in which it was issued. Applications for higher certificate levels (upgrades) do not alter the life status for fields previously issued. No new life certificates shall be issued nor shall any new fields be added to life certificate holders with the life title. Considered non-renewable because no renewal requirements must be met, life certificates are identified by the code letter "D."

Paraprofessionals

All paraprofessionals in the Dougherty County School System must qualify for a Rank IV license.

New Federal Requirements require that paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002 must have one of the following:

A. Completion of at least 2 years of study at an institution of higher education; or

B. An associate's (or higher) degree

Paraprofessional License Renewal Requirements are:

A. Completion of 6 semester hours of college; or

B. 10 staff development units (SDUs)

Instructional Program

Dougherty County's Instructional Program consists of pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Alice Coachman Elementary School, International Studies Elementary Charter School, Jackson Heights Elementary School, Lake Park Elementary School, Lamar Reese Magnet School of the Arts, Lincoln Elementary Magnet School, Live Oak Elementary School, Magnolia Elementary School, Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School, Morningside Elementary School, Northside Elementary School, Radium Springs Elementary School, Sherwood Acres Elementary School, Sylvester Road Elementary School, Turner Elementary School, and West Town Elementary School serve kindergarten through grade five.

Our six middle schools serve grades six through eight. They are Albany Middle School, Dougherty International Education Middle School, Robert A. Cross Middle Magnet School, Merry Acres Middle School, Radium Springs Middle Magnet School of the Arts, and Southside Middle School.

The four high schools serving grades nine through twelve are Albany High School, Dougherty Comprehensive High School, Monroe Comprehensive High School and Westover Comprehensive High School. Each high school houses a Center of Excellence. Albany High is home to the Honors, Law and Multi-Media Center of Excellence, Dougherty Comprehensive High houses the Fine Arts and International Education Center of Excellence, Monroe Comprehensive High is the Pre-Engineering, Math and Technology Center of Excellence and Westover Comprehensive High is home to the Medical Arts Centers of Excellence.

Grades K-5

Grades 6-12

Course Requirements

Assessment Test Requirements

Promotion Criteria

Attendance Requirements

Valid Excuse for Absence

Leaving School Without Permission

Excused from Required Subject

Weapons in School

Student Grievances

Gifted Program

Exceptional Students Program

Title I

Early Intervention Program (EIP)

Age Requirements

Georgia Immunization and Health Certificate Requirements

Student Social Security Numbers

Child Nutrition Services

Safe/Drug-Free Schools Programs

Pre-Kindergarten Program

Grades K-5

The Kindergarten Program follows the guidelines published by the State Department of Education. Time is spent in individual and group activities, reading and math readiness, language arts experiences and unit studies that enable the child to learn about self, others, the community and the world beyond.

The curriculum in grades 1-5 consists of mathematics, science, social studies, health, art, music, physical education and language arts, including reading, writing, English, spelling and handwriting. The adopted basal texts for grades 1-5 are as follows:

Core Areas of Study	CP	CP+	TC	TC+
English/Language Arts	4	4	4	4
Mathematics	4	4	3	3
Science	3	3	3	3
Social Studies	3	3	3	3
Health & Personal Fitness	1	1	1	1
Computer Technology and/or Fine Arts and/or Technology/ Career Prep and/or Foreign Language and/or Junior ROTC	1	1	1	1
Foreign Language	2	2	0	0
Technology/Career-prep units	0	0	4	4
Locally required or elective units	4	4	3	4
State Electives (from Core Courses: English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and/or Foreign Language and/or Fine Arts)	0	2	0	1

Reading: Scott Foresman

English: (integrated with Reading text)

Science: Holt-McDougal

Social Studies: Houghton-Mifflin

Mathematics: Harcourt

Music: Silver-Burdett

Reports of student progress (progress reports and report cards) in grades 1-5 are sent home eight times each year. Kindergarten report cards are sent home three times. The exact date for each reporting period is on the yearly calendar. The grading system for grades 1-5 is as follows:

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
F	Below 70

Progress in Citizenship and Conduct are included in the comments section of the report card. The following designations are used for effort grades in art, music, and P.E.

S	Satisfactory
U	Unsatisfactory

The student's progress is also measured through the Board-adopted Pupil Promotion Policy. The policy identifies specific skills in the areas of reading and mathematics which students must master before they are promoted to the next grade. The progress on each child will be reported as part of the regular weekly folder, progress report, and report card. Promotion and retention shall be in accordance with the policy outlined in the Elementary Schools Promotion Policy.

Grades 6-12

The middle schools and senior high schools operate under a yearly program in which the students register for courses once a year.

Graduation requirements for current high school students, as of May 2008, are as follows:

1. 22, or 24 Carnegie Units as specified by state and local Board policy.
2. Passing score on the Georgia High School Graduation Tests or the Basic Skills Test (certain criteria must be met to take the BST in lieu of the GHSGT).

Graduation Requirements

For students enrolled in high school prior to August 2008

Graduation requirements are based on the State Board Rule adopted in 1997 that expanded educational programs to provide for four diploma tracks. Students may

earn Technical/Career (TC), Technical/Career with Distinction (TC+), College Preparatory (CP), or College Preparatory with Distinction (CP+) diploma seals. The TC+ and CP+ seals are awarded to students who complete additional unit requirements and earn a minimum average of 80 in the core courses as specified by the Georgia Board of Education.

The college preparatory programs feature an emphasis on academic core electives. The purpose of the technology/career preparatory education is to integrate core academic skills and knowledge into career areas.

To earn both the college preparatory and technology/career preparatory seals (also referred to as a dual seal), specific courses are required in the core areas of language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

While students must take and pass a number of required core offerings (physical education, health, Economics/Business/Free-Enterprise, etc.), individual programs of study require that students earn a certain number of Carnegie units in specific areas. Graduation requirements for each program of study are listed below:

In addition to specific course requirements, students must meet criterion scores on all four sections of the Georgia High School Graduation Test and Writing Test before they can receive a high school diploma.

In order to fulfill these requirements, all high schools offer a variety of courses to ensure that students have a broad selection of courses from which to choose, as well as GHSGT remedial classes in the summer.

For students enrolled in high school beginning August 2008 and beyond

New graduation requirements will go into effect for students enrolling in the ninth grade for the first time in the 2008-2009 school year. Beginning with the 2008-2009 Freshman class, Georgia's "tiered" diploma system has been eliminated. The new rule has one common set of requirements for all students with various options for meeting those requirements, including advanced courses such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, post-secondary options and career-oriented courses offered under the Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) programs.

The graduation rule was revised in conjunction with the implementation of the Georgia Performance Standards in English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies as well as electives. The new curriculum and the new graduation requirements will help students graduate from high school with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in college and the workplace.

All students will be required to complete a total of 23 units for graduation. All students will take:

- 4 units of English
- 4 units of Science
- 4 units of Mathematics
- 3 units of Social Studies
- At least 3 units required from Foreign Language* **and/or** CTAE **and/or** Fine Arts for all students
- At least 4 additional electives
- 1 health/physical education course

**Students planning to enter or transfer into a University System of Georgia institution must take two units of the same foreign language.*

Assessment Test Requirements

Students who enter the ninth grade after **July 1, 1991**, must pass the Georgia High School Graduation Tests administered in grade 11 as referenced in State Board of Education Rule 160-3-1-07. Students take the tests for the first time in the spring of the eleventh grade and may retake the tests until criterion scores have been met. Five content areas are covered: English/Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Writing. Students graduating in 1998 and thereafter must pass all five (5) tests as one requirement for the high school diploma.

The Basic Skills Tests are still available to applicable students.

Every student receiving a regular diploma from any of the four Dougherty County high schools must pass either the Basic Skills Test or the High School Graduation Tests.

The high school diploma shall be the official document certifying completion of attendance course requirements, the Basic Skills Tests or the Georgia High School Graduation Tests and other requirements for high school graduation.

Promotion Criteria

Middle Grades

1. A student must achieve a minimum of 70% in each of the following academic disciplines:

- Language Arts*
- Reading
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies

*If Language Arts is taught in a block of time (two consecutive periods), a minimum of 70% in the Language Arts block is equivalent to a minimum of 70% in a Language Arts class and 70% in a Reading class.

2. A student must achieve a minimum of 70% in at least 4 nine-week exploratory offerings (which includes Physical Education).

3. At the end of the school year, a student in grades six, seven, and eight must score a minimum of 800 on the language arts, reading, and mathematics sections of the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests.

Grading System

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
I	Incomplete
F	Failure (69.9 and below)

Citizenship, Conduct, Effort

E	Excellent
I	Improving
S	Satisfactory
NI	Needs Improving
U	Unsatisfactory

Other Alternatives for Promotion

Credit Recovery

Students who fail to meet promotion requirements as outlined in the policy will be advised that they may meet promotion requirements in credit recovery under certain provisions.

Probationary Placement

Students who have otherwise met the criteria for promotion to the 9th grade may only be retained at the 8th grade based upon a written request by the parent(s) or guardian(s), which is recommended by two professional sources outside the school system, two teachers (other than athletic coaches), the principal, Superintendent, and approved by the Board of Education.

Grades 9-12

In grades 9-12, credit will be earned on an individual course basis. Students will be classified as follows:

- Ninth to tenth grade, 5 units
- Tenth to eleventh grade, 10 units
- Eleventh to twelfth grade, 16 units

A grade of "I" (incomplete) will be given to a student who fails to complete course requirements and final examinations; provided, however, an "I" shall only be given if the failure to complete course requirements and final examinations is due to serious illness or other extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the student. Should all course requirements and final examinations not be completed by the end of the following semester, the incomplete shall become a grade of "F".

Attendance Requirements

A student must attend 166 days of the 180-day school year. A student in grades K-8 absent from school more than 14 days shall be retained. A student who is retained under this policy and otherwise would have been promoted may appeal to the Student Disciplinary Tribunal for a special exception. Such appeal must be made in writing to the principal within one week following the end of the year.

The principal in his/her sole discretion may authorize a student to receive credit if the student has absences of more than 14 days in the school year provided the student produces documentation of extenuating circumstances within a reasonable time following the fifteenth absence. In determining whether to grant credit, the principal shall consider, among other factors, current and past academic performance and the disciplinary history of the student.

Any K-8 student receiving credit who has missed more than 14 days in a school year must complete all classwork, tests, projects, homework, and other work of any kind required by all members of the class irrespective of attendance.

Any student in grades 9-12 who misses more than 7 class hours per semester class or 14 class hours per year-long class will not receive credit for that subject. A student who is denied credit under this policy and has a passing grade in the course may appeal to the Student Disciplinary Tribunal for a special exception. Such appeal must be made in writing to the principal within one week following the end of the semester or year.

The principal in his/her sole discretion may authorize a student to receive credit for a class in which the student has absences or more than 7 class hours in a semester class or 14 class hours in a year-long class provided the student produces documentation of extenuating circumstances within a reasonable time following the eighth absence in a semester course and the fifteenth absence in a year-long course. In determining whether to grant credit, the principal shall consider, among other factors, current and past academic performance and the disciplinary history of the student.

Any high school student receiving credit who has missed more than 7 class hours in a semester class or 14 class hours per year-long class must complete all classwork, tests, projects, homework, and other work of any kind required of all members of the class irrespective of attendance.

Valid Excuse for Absence

The following reasons established by the Dougherty County Board of Education are excused absences:

- personal illness or attendance in school endangering a student's health or the health of others
- serious illness or death in a student's immediate family necessitating absence from school
- a court order or an order by a governmental agency, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, mandating absence from school
- celebrating religious holidays which necessitate absence from school
- conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety
- a period not to exceed one day may be allowed for registering to vote or voting in a public election
- a student whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard, and such parent or legal guardian has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat supporting posting, shall be granted excused absences, up to a maximum of five school days per school year, for the day or days missed from school to visit with his or her parent or legal guardian prior to such parent's or legal guardian's deployment or during such parent's or legal guardian's leave

Students shall be counted present when they are serving as pages of the Georgia General Assembly.

Absences shall not penalize a student's grades if the following conditions are met:

- absences are justified and validated for excusable reasons
- make-up work for excused absence was completed satisfactorily
- a grade average of 70 or above has been earned in the course work

Students should present a written excuse upon return after an absence whether excused or unexcused. The following should be specified on each excuse:

- date of the excuse
- date and day of absence
- reason for absence
- signature of parent or guardian

The written excuse must be presented to the student's homeroom teacher, and only students who have excused absences may make up work or tests missed.

Leaving School Without Permission

No student may leave school at any time during the school day without permission of the principal. Any student leaving school without permission may be suspended by the principal, for a period not to exceed ten school days.

Excused from Required Subject

No student shall be excused or exempt from any part of a prescribed course unless a physician verifies in writing that the student is unable to participate in specific class requirements due to a physical disability.

Weapons in School

It is unlawful for any person to carry, possess or have under control any weapon at a school building, school function, or on school property, or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the school.

The term "weapon" means and includes any pistol, revolver, or any weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind, or any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, any other knife having a blade of two or more inches, straightedge razor, razor blade, box cutter, spring stick, metal knucks, blackjack, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a way to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chuck, or fighting chain, throwing star or oriental dart, or any weapon of like kind, any stun gun or taser.

Penalties for violation of this policy will be determined in accordance with the student code of conduct and Board of Education student discipline policies, and may result in criminal prosecution. Board policies JCDAD, JCDD, JDD/JDE address student suspension/expulsion.

Electronic Devices Prohibited

Students may not carry pagers, cell phones, blackberries, or other electronic communication devices in school except for health or other unusual reasons approved by the Board of Education. Any student in violation of this policy shall be subject to placement in an alternative education program which may include ISS.

Student Grievances

It is the belief of the Dougherty County Board of Education that students have both the right and responsibility to express related concerns and grievances to the faculty and administration. Therefore, students shall be assured the opportunity for an orderly presentation and review of grievances.

Board policy JCE (1) addresses the procedure to provide a systematic method whereby students can resolve differences that might develop between them and professional employees of the Board of Education in an equitable and expeditious manner.

It is the policy of this school system not to discriminate against any student because of race, color, national origin, religion, creed, gender or disability. The contact person is Ms. Barbara Turner at 431-3437.

Gifted Education Program

Gifted students represent a group whose learning style and thinking ability require experiences that are outside the educational mainstream. The program is committed to providing an educational environment designed to challenge these special learners to the greatest possible extent of their abilities. The gifted staff is dedicated to providing learning experiences that are grounded in higher level thinking processes and production of complex products. The long-range goals of the program are self actualization for the gifted student and the development of a sense of responsibility to self, school, and society.

Gifted Eligibility Criteria

As defined by the Georgia Department of Education, "a gifted student is one who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual, and/or creative abilities, exhibits an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or excels in specific academic fields, and who needs special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her abilities."

Teachers or parents can request that students be considered for evaluation review. Parents can contact their school to fill out an application for evaluation consideration.

According to the rules of the Georgia Department of Education, a student is eligible for placement in the Gifted Education Program if he or she meets eligibility requirements in Category I or Category II below.

I. Mental Ability and Achievement

Grades K-2: Total score of 99 percentile on a mental ability test and achievement test score of 90 percentile in total reading, total math, or composite.

Grades 3-12: Total score of 96 percentile on a mental ability test and achievement test score of 90 percentile in total reading, total math, or composite.

II. Multiple Criteria (Grades K-12). Student must meet criteria in three out of four of the following categories:

A. Mental Ability - 96 percentile score on a mental ability test.

B. Achievement - 90 percentile score in total reading, total math, or composite.

C. Creativity - 90 percentile score on a creativity test.

D. Motivation - Overall 88 academic average during the last two years (grades 3-12) or score of 90 percentile on a motivational rating scale (K-2).

Program Descriptions

Elementary Program (L.I.F.E. Lab)

Gifted students in Kindergarten through fifth grade are enrolled one day each week in a "pull out" program known as L.I.F.E. Lab (Learning In a Flexible Environment). The elementary gifted faculty includes five gifted endorsed teachers. Students experience a variety of topics within thematic units in a student-centered environment. Units require critical and creative thinking and allow

students to discover concepts and principles beyond their grade level curriculum. Our goals are for each child to become a self-directed learner and to work cooperatively and productively within a group. To continue in the gifted program, students must maintain satisfactory performance in their academics at their regular school as well as at L.I.F.E. Lab.

As part of the gifted elementary program, students are given the option of attending a gifted cluster school where gifted students are grouped together in a classroom with other students in their grade level. This allows teachers to provide greater challenge and to differentiate instruction to meet the academic needs of these gifted learners.

Middle School Program

All gifted students in grades six, seven, and eight attend Merry Acres Middle School to participate in the Excel program. The gifted students in Excel are given advanced level instruction each day in math, science, social studies, language arts, and reading. Gifted middle school students who are zoned for other Dougherty County middle schools are transported to Merry Acres Middle School where they participate in all aspects of the school for the entire day.

Gifted teachers modify the regular curriculum by compacting, enriching, and accelerating state requirements. Students are encouraged to develop and use critical thinking and problem-solving skills in a variety of projects. Research skills are also stressed in order for students to learn how to access information, analyze and evaluate various types of data, make predictions, and draw appropriate conclusions. Students have opportunities to participate in workshops and field trips that actively involve them in higher level, creative thinking skills.

High School Program

Gifted high school students in grades nine through twelve are served at their high school. Each high school also has regular education teachers who are qualified to teach gifted students in their content area. Students are then clustered in those particular subject area classes for advanced instruction. Parents of gifted students should check with the guidance counselor at the particular high school for information and qualifications for advanced classes. Gifted/advanced level classes include opportunities for developing advanced skills in research, written and oral communication, critical thinking and evaluation, independent study, and production of sophisticated products.

Internship Program

Gifted seniors who meet the qualifications have the opportunity to participate in the career internship program at a local business, agency, or organization. Students earn a grade and high school elective credit toward graduation. This gives the student a valuable look into a career field so that he or she will have first-hand experience and knowledge about that career. This inside look into a career field puts the student in contact with professionals who can share helpful insights about the specific career. The program began in 1994 and students have completed internships in pre-medicine, physical therapy, engineering, architecture, law, business, computer science, education, journalism, broadcasting, veterinary science and other career fields.

To qualify for the Internship Program, gifted students must have a minimum academic grade point average of 3.5, have earned 18 units of credit by the end of their junior year, and have recommendations from three teachers. Students can intern for one or two semesters and earn elective credit. Students must be able to supply their own transportation.

Exceptional Students Program

The Dougherty County School System's Exceptional Students Program is designed to provide appropriate educational opportunities to all eligible, disabled students from three through 21 years of age.

Approximately 1,670 students in the Dougherty County School System receive special services in the following areas:

- autism
- deaf/blind
- emotional/behavioral disorders
- hearing impairment/deaf
- intellectual disability (mild, moderate, severe, profound)
- orthopedic impairment
- other health impairment
- severe emotional/behavioral disorder

- significant developmental delay (ages 3-5)
- specific learning disabled
- speech-language impairment
- traumatic brain injury
- visual impairment/blind

The program offers an appropriate, individualized educational program and related services through a continuum of delivery models. Related services are provided, when appropriate, in order to maximize learning potential. The related services available include audiological services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, orientation and mobility training, behavioral analysis and special transportation. Through the community-based program, students are given the opportunity to explore a variety of careers through actual on-the-job training provided by job coaches. The High School/High Tech program offers students the opportunity to explore careers in science, technology, and engineering. This is a collaborative effort with community agencies, colleges, universities, and technical schools. Project SEARCH is a one year, high school transition program which provides training and education leading to employment for *individuals with disabilities*. Students learn employability skills in the classroom and job skills while participating in a variety of internships/experiences. The cornerstone of Project SEARCH is a total immersion in a business with the collaboration of other agencies. Students with disabilities may participate in the community sponsored Special Olympics.

Referrals may come from any person who suspects that a student may be disabled. Referrals frequently come from parents, school personnel, the medical profession, and community agencies that deal with youth. A student enrolled in any Dougherty County school should be referred through the School Student Support—Pyramids of Intervention/Response to Intervention Team. Identified disabled students entering the system for the first time should be referred to the Exceptional Students Program Office.

Leadership personnel, itinerant teachers and system-wide support personnel are housed in the Exceptional Students Center, 722 Corn Ave. Leadership is provided by the Exceptional Students Co-Directors, Assistant Director and Coordinators.

Title 1

Title 1 (Helping Disadvantaged Children Meet High Standards of Educational Excellence) administers funds from the U. S. Department of Education to DCSS to provide high-quality education for disadvantaged/at-risk youth.

Title 1 School-wide Programs have been implemented in twenty-one schools in Dougherty County. Each school-wide program includes a number of specific components:

- a comprehensive needs assessment
- school-wide reform strategies
- highly qualified professional staff
- professional development
- strategies to increase parent involvement

Title 1 schools are required to enter into a parent contract that defines the responsibilities of teachers, students and parents. All school-wide plans consist of a copy of the contract. Parental involvement is supported by utilizing parent facilitators or coordinators in each Title 1 school.

Early Intervention Program (EIP)

Children start school at a designated chronological age, but differ greatly in their individual development and experience base. The Early Intervention Program (EIP) is designed to serve students with identified developmental deficiencies in grades kindergarten through five who are at risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade level performance. The purpose of the Early Intervention Program is to provide additional instructional resources to help students who are performing below grade level in reading and/or math obtain the necessary academic skills in the shortest possible time. All identified students shall be moved into the Early Intervention Program, provided assistance, and moved out upon reaching grade level performance.

Age Requirements

Georgia law requires that students attend school from their sixth through their sixteenth birthday.

A child must be five years old on or before September 1 to enter a public kindergarten. The child must be six on or before September 1 to enter the first grade. School systems require birth certificates for proof of age.

Georgia Immunization and Health Certificate Requirements

Georgia law requires a certificate of immunization for a student to be enrolled in a public school. Immunizations are required for measles, rubella, tetanus, diphtheria, polio, mumps, whooping cough, Hepatitis B and chickenpox. Georgia law also requires certification of eye, ear and dental examinations.

Student Social Security Numbers

A social security number is requested for all students enrolled in public schools. However, no student shall be denied enrollment in the Dougherty County School System for declining to provide a personal social security number or for declining to apply for such a number. Temporary student numbers are assigned to students who are applying for a social security number. A permanent student identification number is assigned if a social security number will not be provided. Social security numbers are treated in the same confidential manner as all other records and in accordance with the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974.

Child Nutrition Services

The School Child Nutrition Services Program is an integral part of the total educational program of Dougherty County Schools. It provides well-balanced meals and serves as a laboratory for students in nutrition education. The program's mission is to provide effective child nutrition program to Dougherty County Students through outreach, policy compliance and reporting, nutritional integrity and technical assistance. The objectives of the Child Nutrition Services Program are that all students will eat a quality school meal daily and that all students will receive nutrition education that will teach them to make healthy choices for a lifetime.

Approximately 11,000 student breakfasts and 14,500 student lunches are served each day. All students may eat breakfast at no charge. Student lunch at elementary schools is \$1.25 (\$.40 for those qualifying for reduced prices) and at the middle

and high schools is \$1.50. Adult breakfast is \$1.25 and lunch is \$2.50. Breakfast for visitors is \$2.00 and lunch is \$3.25.

Safe/Drug-Free Schools Program

The Dougherty County School System has a variety of programs and support services to address the problems faced by today's youth. They are designed to make school a safe place to learn and reinforce skills taught in the classroom. These programs provide educators with prevention and intervention programs based on resiliency and protective factor research. They support the premise that all students can learn and provide the process that focuses on assuring that all students succeed in a safe disciplined environment. The drug prevention programs are integrated into the health and science curriculum, while the support programs are available to assist where needed. A system-wide crisis intervention team of trained professionals is available to provide assistance during emergencies and in critical situations. A ***Crisis Response and School Safety Plan Manual*** is in every school.

Pre-Kindergarten Program

Dougherty County's Pre-Kindergarten Program, accredited with quality by the Georgia Accrediting Commission, serves 200 four-year-old children and their families. This is an all day program which operates during the regular school year. Breakfast, lunch and a snack are provided each day. The emphasis is on developing the potential of each four-year-old through a comprehensive developmentally appropriate instructional program. Experiences are provided for children that are vital to achieving our nation's first education goal -- that all children enter school ready to learn.

For more information, call the Pre-K office at 431-1290.

Special Services

The following services are available to assist teachers in Dougherty County:

School Volunteer Services

Partners in Excellence

Southwest Georgia GLRS

Oak Tree GNETS Program

Extended Day Program

Testing and Evaluation Center

InTech Program

Teacher Academy

New Teacher Induction Program

Endorsement Programs

Certificate Renewal (courses, workshops, and seminars)

School Volunteer Services

The Dougherty County School Volunteer Program was implemented in September 1971. Through the years the program has grown from its first group of fifty volunteers to approximately 1300 volunteers. The program serves all elementary, middle, and high schools as well as other programs of the Dougherty county school System. Volunteers work in school offices, the media center, classrooms, and Parent Centers. They also chaperone field trips, help with fund raising, assist with service projects, read to students, and tutor.

The School Volunteer Program works with the Public Health Department to offer Scoliosis screening for all 6th and 8th graders an with the Medical Alliance Office to provide vision screening for all 3rd graders.

Volunteers are recognized annually for their service. All volunteers receive a certificate, and those who have volunteered 100 hours or more receive a volunteer pin.

Partners in Excellence

In 1986, representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and the Dougherty County School System joined to form a partnership. They shared a vision that continues today. That vision is to work together to provide not only a quality education, but the opportunity for all children to achieve excellence. Partners provide incentives for students, donate equipment, assist with service projects, serve as resource persons, and tutor and mentor students.

Partnerships with Albany State University, Albany Technical College, Darton College, Communities in Schools, Albany/Dougherty Partnership for Education and other institutions and nonprofit organizations bring numerous resources and opportunities to students in the Dougherty County School System.

Partnerships heighten community spirit, a sense of mutual achievement, improve the quality of life, and economic stability of the community. Partnerships are vital. The goal of the Partners in Excellence Office is to strengthen and facilitate partnerships and to open the walls of the classroom to include the entire community as a learning field.

The number of Partners in Excellence has grown from 28 to 155. Partners in Excellence are recognized annually at a Chamber of Commerce sponsored Rise and Shine Breakfast.

Southwest Georgia GLRS

Southwest GA Georgia Learning Resources Systems (GLRS) is a statewide network of 17 resource centers offering services to parents and educators of students with disabilities (SWD). It is a special project of the Georgia Department of Education, Division for Special Education Services and Supports.

The Southwest GA GLRS is located at 915 S. McKinley Street in Albany Georgia. The counties SW GA GLRS serves are Baker, Calhoun, Colquitt, Decatur, Dougherty, Early, Grady, Lee, Miller, Mitchell, Pelham City, Seminole, Terrell, Thomas, Thomasville City, and Worth.

Southwest GA GLRS collaborates with many agencies and programs including RESA, Even Start, GA Department of Education State SPDG Graduation Project, Georgia Young Children Association, Council for Exceptional Children, Kids Expo, Babies Can't Wait, Parent to Parent, Camp Arrow, Parent Mentor Program, SPDG Graduation First Project plus supporting schools and parents as they serve children with special needs through various activities. SW GLRS partners with selected schools that have not made AYP for SWD. With No Child Left Behind and IDEA legislation, GLRS priority has shifted to include serving regular education teachers with special education teachers since the regular education classroom is the primary environment that students with disabilities are being taught. This move has made a very positive change for at risk and struggling students in those regular education classrooms as well as for students with disabilities.

Parents are a very important part of providing services. They are always encouraged to call if they need assistance or information on child find, to make instructional materials for their children, check out materials on topics of special education or adaptive equipment, and to attend trainings sponsored by the center.

Types of services available through GLRS

- A statewide training network for teachers, parents, administrators, programs, schools, and systems.
- A web site that offers information about individual center locations, services,

and calendar of activities. It also offers many of the GLRS publications as well as links to additional services. Check www.glr.org

- Loan library of specialized instructional materials, equipment and assistive devices. A teacher resource workroom for making instructional materials for use with SWD.
- Referral and information about services for SWD.
- Help with identifying students with disabilities and assistance in finding appropriate programs for them.
- Publications on a variety of topics for SWD. Many of these publications can be found on the GLRS web site.
- Provide training and support for school systems required to use 15% of their Title VI-B funds to provide “Early Intervening” Services including when appropriate consortia on the implementation for GA’s Student Achievement Pyramid.
- Offer training to support effective co-teaching
- Develop and implement Capacity Building Projects

Kathie Rigsby - Director kripsby@dougherty.k12.ga.us

Nora Swenson - Child Serve Coordinator nswenson@dougherty.k12.ga.us

Sheryl Phillips- Secretary sPhillips@dougherty.k12.ga.us

To receive services or information call, email or come by the center. Southwest GA GLRS hours during the school year are Monday through Thursday 7:45am to 4:15; Friday 7:45am to 3:45. The center is closed for lunch from 12 to 1. Summer hours varies so please call before you come. You can get training /information that all the GLRS in the state sponsor by visiting the web site www.glr.org or call SW GA GLRS to be added to our contact list.

Southwest Georgia GLRS

915 S. McKinley Street

Albany, GA 31701

(229) 431-1230

Fax (229) 435-1528

Oak Tree GNETS (GA Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support) Program

The Oak Tree GNETS Program provides educational services to severely emotionally disturbed and behaviorally disordered students five through twenty-one years of age. Services include diagnostic, educational therapy classes, individual and family counseling, summer camping program and consultation to schools and agencies.

The program serves Dougherty, Lee, Worth, Terrell, Baker, Early, Calhoun and Miller counties. The elementary site for students from Dougherty, Lee, Terrell, Baker and Worth counties is located at 1520 Cordell Ave. The Middle School students from these counties are housed at Merry Acres Middle School and the High School students are housed at Albany High. There is a Center based Middle School and High School Program in Early County for students from Early, Miller and Calhoun counties. Elementary students from these three counties are housed at Early County Elementary and Calhoun County Elementary.

Students may be referred to Oak Tree through each district's Special Education Programs. Each referral to the program is screened and considered for evaluation. An IEP team then makes decisions about the student's eligibility for services.

For additional information, please contact the Program Director at 229-431-1323.

Extended Day Program

The EDP (Extended Day Program) is an "after school alternative" for students in the DCSS. Each school day, after the bell rings, until 6:10 p.m., child care is offered to any DCSS student, pre-k through grade eight. The EDP has four main components: safety, time for homework, recreation and snacks. There are several EDP sites, including one at the Dougherty Center Pre-K Program. If a particular school does not have an EDP site, EDP students are shuttled by bus to an EDP site nearby. In the summer, the EDP provides all day child care through the EDP Summer Camp. There is a very reasonable tuition fee for the EDP, and reduced rates are available for those who qualify. For more information, call the EDP office at 431-1280.

Testing and Evaluation Center

The Dougherty County School System provides continuous monitoring of pupil progress through a comprehensive testing program. In compliance with local, state and federal requirements, a variety of tests are administered throughout the year, all coordinated through the Testing and Evaluation Center.

In addition to a broad-based criterion-referenced test, a series of individual academic disciplinary tests and writing assessments, directed at evaluating QCC/ GPS mastery, will be administered to selected grade level students.

For students who entered ninth grade for the first time after July 1, 1991, passing scores on the Georgia High School Graduation Tests are required for a high school diploma. The Basic Skills Tests apply to students who entered the ninth grade prior to July 1991.

The tests administered to students include the following:

Test	Grade(s)	Date(s)
Georgia High School Graduation Tests	11, 12	Sept, Nov, Mar, Jul
Writing Assessments	5, 8	Jan, Feb, Mar
Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests	3-8	Apr
Georgia Kindergarten Inventory for Developing Skills	K	Throughout the year
Differential Aptitude Tests	8	Oct
End-of-Course Tests	8, 9-12	Dec, Apr
<i>Possible NRT administration</i>		Fall

Students who appear to have learning or behavioral difficulties are referred to the school Student Support Team. Referral for specialized testing may or may not be an outcome of the team meetings. Because Student Support Teams are a function of the regular education program, support team procedures and test referrals are directed through the Center.

Teacher Academy

The mission of the Teacher Academy is to ensure the continuous professional growth of education personnel by establishing a consistent, sustained base of support and renewal. The Academy's major challenge is to support school staffs in

their mission to positively impact students' learning by providing professional and personal growth based on individual and organizational assessed needs.

The mission of the Department of Staff Development is to work cooperatively with all divisions of the school system to provide opportunities for professional and personal growth based on individual and organizational assessed needs. These opportunities are delivered through a variety of school, county, and field-based programs which provide personnel with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to be successful and to assist the system in accomplishing its goals.

Our aim is to be responsive to the system by meeting current and anticipated needs and by continually evaluating, refining, and expanding our services. The Academy is committed to educational improvement and will continually investigate and communicate innovative ideas and promote excellence.

The Academy is dedicated to providing quality ongoing and systematic staff development training.

New Teacher Induction Program

The Dougherty County School System New Teacher Induction Program is designed for:

- Beginning Teachers -- First year of teaching
- New Teachers -- Experienced teachers new to Dougherty County

The goals of the New Teacher Induction Program are:

- To familiarize teachers new to Dougherty County with the school system, culture, curriculum and community
- To assist new teachers in acquiring skills and teaching strategies that will improve their teaching performance.
- To equip new teachers with the skills to maximize student achievement.
- To prepare new teachers for a successful beginning and for retention in the teaching profession.
- To involve experienced teachers in the transmission of skill, knowledge and behaviors to beginning teachers.

Endorsement Programs

Gifted Endorsement

Staff development training is provided to selected teachers in the Gifted field. The program is organized into articulated courses which continuously build toward competencies in the gifted area. The program structure is built upon specific beliefs, commitments, and is sequenced to address all required competencies for a teacher within the gifted endorsement program.

Certificate Renewal

(Courses, Workshops and Seminars)

Staff development courses and workshops offered at the Teacher Academy are designed to enhance professional growth. While some courses are generic in content and may be taken by any teacher, administrator, secretary, or other system personnel, many are designed specifically for certificated and non-certificated persons in designated system assignments. Courses are free to all DCSS personnel. A PLU is awarded to participants for each ten (10) hours of participation.