

# West Elementary School



2018-2019  
Faculty Handbook

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## **NEW TEACHERS**

Welcome to the Russellville City School System and to West Elementary School. We are grateful that you have chosen to join our family. Our purpose is to assist every student as much as possible, and we realize part of this assistance is helping you to adjust to a new situation and to feel comfortable. Therefore, feel at ease and free to ask any individual for assistance. You will be assigned a “mentor” teacher that can assist you with questions you might have. Again, welcome, and we hope you feel very comfortable as you join our family at West Elementary School.

## **ALL TEACHERS**

Please be reminded of the objectives established for each academic course and our overall philosophy. We use these as a guide to reach our goals for every student. As we all know, organization and planning is the key to success in any situation.

## **ABSENCES (Students)**

The following is an excerpt from the Russellville City Schools Board Policy Manual:

- I. Regular attendance is the actual attendance of a pupil during the school day as defined by law and regulations of the State Board of Education. A student who is absent or tardy without the principal's/designee's approval shall have his/her parent(s)/legal guardian report such absences or tardies to the school center in the manner prescribed by the *Attendance Policy*. [ See Appendix B-5.40]
  - A. The *Attendance Policy* shall prescribe attendance requirements including, but not limited to, provisions for excused and unexcused absences, opportunities to make up work assignments, and reporting absences.
  - B. Students shall be excused from any examination, study, or work assignments for observance of a religious holiday or because the tenets of his/her religion forbid secular activity at such time. The school principal /designee shall implement this provision on an individual basis pursuant to Alabama statutes and State Board of Education rules.
  - C. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student who avails himself/herself to the provisions of this rule.
- II. Student attendance will be monitored on a daily basis and parents contacted as required by law.
- III. A person designated by the Superintendent or his/her designee shall investigate truancy problems. (See Appendix B 5.40 (1)).
- IV. Student attendance for driver's license purposes shall be processed as prescribed by law.

- V. Each school and the system shall take appropriate action as required by Alabama statutes when a student has excessive absences or is truant (See Appendix B 5.40 (1)).

The following is an excerpt from the WES Student Handbook:

**Excused Absences:**

A student shall be excused for any absence for one of the following reasons:

1. Illness
2. Inclement weather, which would be dangerous to the life or health of the student if he/she attended school
3. Legal quarantine
4. Death in immediate family
5. Emergency conditions as determined by the Superintendent or his designee

**Pre-Approved Absences:**

You may want to take your child out of school to accompany you on an out-of-town educational trip or vacation. The principal may grant permission for such a trip if your child is not in danger of exceeding 20 absences. The request should be made in writing and submitted to the office at least three days in advance. Otherwise, the absence will be unexcused. These absences do count toward the 21-day limit.

**Unexcused Absences:**

Any days shall be considered unexcused for one of the following reasons:

1. Truancy
2. Absent through parental neglect
3. Poverty
4. Work

**Reporting of Absences:**

Whenever a student is absent from school, the following procedures should apply:

1. The parent or guardian must send a note explaining the absence with the child the first day he/she returns to school. If this is not done by the third day the child has returned to school, the absence will be recorded permanently as "unexcused." As of August 2015 call in excuses will no longer be accepted. **We will only accept a total of 10 written excuses per year. The other excuses must be professionally verified** (doctor, dentist, appt. with a lawyer, court appearance, verification of death in the immediate family, or an emergency condition as determined by the school administrators). Failure to provide professional verification will result in an unexcused absence.
2. When a student reaches one (1) unexcused absence or five (5) unexcused tardies, his or her parents will be notified with a letter from the principal. This letter will be a warning that when the student reaches five (5) unexcused absences or eight (8) unexcused tardies, he or she will be reported to the Early Warning Program at the Franklin County Court House. Parents and the student will be required to attend Early Warning Court with the District Judge.

### **Limit on Total Absences:**

Students who are absent from school more than 20 days must be brought before the Attendance Committee to determine promotion or retention. The committee will be composed of the student's teacher, counselor, and the principal or her designee.

**For a student to be recognized for PERFECT ATTENDANCE, the child must have been in school a full day for every day of the school year.**

### **ABSENCES (Teachers)**

All teachers should email Mrs. Hollimon, Mrs. Moon, and cc Denise Allen if they know in advance that they will be out of school. Teachers should include the date to be out, the substitute, and what kind of day they will be taking (sick, personal, professional). Teachers must request, in writing, (an e-mail is fine) to take a personal day for an absence. If the teacher does not know in advance that she/he will be out they should text Mrs. Hollimon and Mrs. Moon that morning a message of who the substitute will be for the day. Upon returning to school the teacher should email Mrs. Hollimon, Mrs. Moon, and cc Denise Allen that she/he has been out and what kind of day she/he will be using. Remember – it is your responsibility to secure your own sub. Please do not ask Cheri Wallace or Denise Allen to do this for you. It is your responsibility to ensure your arrival/dismissal duties are covered on days you are absent.

**Please refer to section 5.10 in the RCS Board Policy Manual regarding teacher absences.**

### **ALARM PROCEDURES**

If you set the alarm off accidentally, either coming in or leaving, please follow these steps: (1) Go back and put your code in again to stop the alarm. If this does not work, check your code to confirm correctness and try again. If that does not work, try another keypad. (2) Call the principal at 256-412-0812 and report false alarm. If you cannot reach the principal, call the assistant principal at 256-436-1642.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Announcements will be made at the beginning of the school day at 7:55am. You are expected to be in your classroom with your students listening to announcements.

### **ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE**

All teachers are required to sign in when they arrive at school each day using the Leave Management System located on all staff computers in the building. If your computer is not working, you may sign-in on the office computer or a computer in another classroom. If you have been absent, you will choose the type of day that you took on the day you were out. Please pay close attention when signing in. If you have been absent and had a sub, choosing LSI will not allow your sub to be paid for the day. Always contact Mrs. Allen for any half days taken.

Teachers are required to be in the classroom no later than 7:30 each morning. Teachers should leave campus no earlier than 3:15 each afternoon. If a teacher is going to be late he/she will need to text the principal and assistant principal so that his/her students will be supervised. **If a teacher needs to leave early he/she will need to**

**notify the principal by email to ask for approval and sign out accordingly. It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure her/his morning or afternoon duty is covered when absent.**

### **CALENDAR**

The school calendar of events will be posted on a shared Google Calendar for your viewing. Please check it often and make your plans accordingly.

### **CELL PHONE USE**

Teachers are permitted to bring cell phones to school; however, they should be on silent and put away during the instructional day. Teachers are permitted to talk or text on their cell phone **ONLY** during duty free times. Teacher should not use a cellphone for personal reasons while students are under their supervision (classroom, cafeteria, playground, hallways, assemblies, etc.).

### **COMPUTER USAGE**

All computers and other technology devices are the property of Russellville City Schools and are monitored daily. Teachers may use the computers to check email, post grades, word processing, and to look up educational sites. Computer usage should be limited during instructional time.

### **COPY MACHINES**

In operating these machines, teachers should follow instructions carefully. If a problem occurs (jams, etc.) notify your grade representative or the office and they will contact JT Ray. WES copy machines are for instructional purposes only. They are not to be used for extracurricular or personal copies. Students should not use the copy machines.

### **DISCIPLINE**

West Elementary School teachers are cooperatively responsible for the discipline of students at any place on the school grounds. Students are subject to the direction of any and all members of the faculty and will be governed accordingly for the good of all concerned.

Teachers must be careful about how they handle discipline problems with students in other classrooms. Students should not be taken out of other classrooms to be disciplined. The principal or assistant principal should handle the problem if there is a situation that involves a child in another classroom. The students should be brought to the office and it will be investigated and the students disciplined accordingly. **Please contact the office before sending a student referral. A discipline referral form must accompany the child.** This will be used for documentation. Group punishment is strongly discouraged. If you cannot identify individual students, do not punish anyone. When a class gets this far out of hand, the matter should be discussed with the principal.

**Be Firm!! Be Fair!! Be Consistent!!**

**Treat every child as you would want your own child treated!**

## **DRESS**

Professionalism should always be shown in your dress. Remember you are employed as a teacher and you are on the job at school. Your dress should reflect this position. T-shirts and jeans should be kept to a minimum.

Plunging necklines, short skirts and jeans with holes are not acceptable. Bermuda shorts are only allowed for certain activities (Spring Fling, field trips, or other principal approved activities).

Fridays are designated as Russellville Spirit Day and your dress can reflect this. Other activities may be planned during the year and the principal will alert you to dress changes for these activities (ex. Hat day).

## **EARLY DISMISSAL**

There will be certain days throughout the year when early dismissal may occur. Examples are Homecoming, Severe Weather days, State Ballgames, etc. Teachers are responsible for knowing how each child in their classroom will be going home. Teachers should alert the principal early if a child doesn't have transportation that afternoon so that the situation can be resolved before dismissal time. Teachers should remain on campus until all of their students have been picked up unless otherwise directed by the principal.

## **FACULTY MEETINGS**

Faculty meetings are scheduled to be held on the first Wednesday of each month and should be attended by **ALL** certified personnel. Please make every effort to leave the afternoon of the first Wednesday of each month open. When possible, Mrs. Hollimon will notify the faculty in plenty of time if there are any changes. Plans should be changed in order to attend faculty meetings.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips for educational purposes are encouraged. We will always comply with School Board policies for trips and such trips should be approved by the principal before they are discussed with the students or placed on the calendar. We must always keep in mind the cost and frequency of field trips so as not to place an undue burden on some students and parents.

Teachers will document that funds are available to cover trips and that insurance has been purchased. Mrs. Hollimon and the Superintendent must approve all field trips and parent letters concerning field trips. Please use the Field Trip Request/Parental Permission Form found on the Intranet. All monies must be turned in to the bookkeeper by an agreed upon date prior to the trip in order to get checks ready. Chaperones should be used at a rate of 1 to each 10 students; this does not include the teacher. Teachers are responsible for explaining the checkout procedure for all field trips. Only parents, grandparents, or guardians may check their child out from a field trip location. This should be done at the field trip location and there are no exceptions to this rule.

## **FINANCIAL**

When you receive money from a student or parent, receipt it in your gray folder and give the receipt to the student. Any day you receive money, you will need to turn all money collected, your receipt book, and a completed Money Form in to Mrs. Allen. This should be done each day you receive money from a student or parent. **NO money is to be kept in a classroom overnight.**

## **FLOORS**

Each teacher is responsible for the orderliness of his/her room. Litter should not be allowed on the floor during classes. Cleanliness and the proper care of property must be taught by our actions. Chairs should be placed on student desks at the end of every day.

## **FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT**

Each teacher is responsible for the care of the furniture and equipment in his/her room. The greatest factor in keeping marks off desks and walls is the teacher. In rooms where teachers are appropriately concerned about these matters there is seldom any writing or drawing on desks or walls. In these rooms, when it does occur, the teacher should see to it that someone cleans it up. It reflects badly on the teacher when writing or drawing remains on a piece of furniture or wall a second day. Worse still, it teaches students that this is acceptable.

## **GIFTED/ENRICHMENT**

Gifted students are those who perform at or who have demonstrated the potential to perform at high levels in academic or creative fields when compared to others of their age, experience, or environment. These students require services not ordinarily provided by the regular school program. Students possessing these abilities can be found in all populations, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor.

Teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self, or any other individuals with knowledge of the student's abilities may refer a student. Additionally, all second grade students will be observed as potential gifted referrals using a gifted behavior checklist.

For each student referred, information is gathered in the areas of Aptitude, Characteristics, and Performance. The information is entered on a matrix where points are assigned according to established criteria. The total number of points earned determines if the student qualifies for gifted services.

Submit a request for referral in writing to the Guidance Counselor at your child's school.

## **GRADING PROCEDURES**

Each teacher is required to record a grade in each subject area for each week of the nine-week grading period. Grades should be recorded in a timely manner. Parents should be notified on a weekly basis of grades (signed papers). Teachers are

encouraged to look at class averages on grades and constantly evaluate the effectiveness of their instruction. Always recheck printed report cards. If a student receives accommodations in the classroom, this should be indicated on the report card in the comments section.

### **HOMEWORK**

Teachers are encouraged to evaluate the purpose of homework. Homework should be given ONLY if it serves a specific purpose in assisting students in learning. Teachers are encouraged to assign homework with the fact in mind that students differ and assignments made might take one student 15 minutes to complete, whereas another student might spend one hour on the same assignment. Students should not receive multiple checks for failing to return or complete homework.

### **IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION**

WES is fortunate to have In-School Suspension as a means of discipline. Students are placed in ISS **ONLY** by the principal or assistant principal when it is deemed necessary.

### **KEYS**

All teachers are given one classroom key and one key to their outside door. All outside doors will remain locked during the school day; therefore, all teachers should carry their keys with them at all times.

### **LEAVING CAMPUS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

Teachers are allowed to leave campus during their planning period as long as they sign out at the office (by the principal's office) before leaving. They also must sign back in upon return. This should be kept to a minimum. A teacher should not be leaving every day. Time without students is designated as planning time and teachers should take advantage of this time to prepare instruction. Please do not ask someone else to sign out or in for you. You are not to leave campus at any time if you have students assigned to you. If an emergency arises and a teacher must leave immediately, the principal **must** be contacted first. If the principal is not available, the assistant principal must be notified.

### **LESSON PLANS**

ALL teachers must keep a lesson plan book. Lesson plans are very important to instruction and should be kept up to date. These are documentation that the College and Career Ready Standards are being taught and must be kept on file in your room for five years. Your lesson plans should reflect grade-appropriate standards, differentiated learning and WIDA standards. Lesson plans may be checked at any time by an administrator and should be located on your desk.

### **MAKE-UP WORK**

All make-up work should be completed in accordance with the following time frame: For an excused absence of one to three days, the student will have three days to complete the work that was assigned during the absence. If the excused absence has been longer than three days, the student will have the same number of days to complete the missed work as he/she was absent.

If the work/test was assigned prior to the absence, the student will be expected to take the test and turn in the work **on the day he/she returns to school**. This rule also applies to school related absences due to parental consent with the permission of the principal.

If a student does not complete his/her make-up work on schedule, then he/she will receive a zero on that work. Any incomplete grades on report cards must be cleared before the end of the following 9 week period.

### **MAIL BOXES**

Teacher mailboxes are located in various places in the building. You will be told where your box is located. Please check your mail each morning when you arrive, during planning, and each afternoon before you leave school. Please do not send a student to check your mail. The boxes have been placed high enough to make this difficult for a child to reach.

### **OFFICE REFERRALS**

Teachers should always follow classroom rules and consequences as stated at the beginning of the school year. A student should be brought to the office only after every level of consequence has been exhausted. If a child is sent to the office for discipline purposes, he or she must have a completed discipline referral form. The Code of Conduct established by the Board of Education should be very familiar to each teacher and the offenses by the student should always match the consequences. Remember, the first contact with the parent should not have to be made by the principal or assistant principal. Communication is the key to better management in the classroom.

### **PETS**

As stated in the student handbook, pets are not allowed on school grounds. Teachers should also abide by this policy.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Professional Development is strongly encouraged among faculty and is usually approved if funds are available. If a teacher is interested in being granted professional leave, a PD form (located on the intranet) must be filled out in advance, approved by the principal, and sent to the Central Office for the approval of the Superintendent.

### **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Professional organizations play a major role in improvements in education today. Too often we tend to forget that legislators are usually interested because the professional organizations have been conducting research and presenting their findings to the public and the legislature over and over until some progress is made. It is a privilege and the duty of every teacher, who is interested in the progress of education, to be a member of our professional organizations and to support them with ideas, work, encouragement, and constructive criticism.

## **PROMOTION/RETENTION POLICY**

- 1 Students will be retained when they fail to pass reading or math.
- 2 A teacher may recommend that a student repeat the current level even though passing grades have been attained. If this should occur, a plan of action will be proposed for the following year and parental approval is required.
- 3 A student may be placed in the next grade when school personnel who are familiar with the child feel that it is in the student's best interest.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Public relations are an important factor in any effective school. Publicity is an important part of good public relations. Teachers are encouraged to make an effort to understand all phases of the West Elementary Program. They should stay informed about new developments throughout the school program so that the community can in turn be adequately informed about the interesting and educational activities going on in our school.

The most important aspect of public relations is that part which takes place in the classroom. Students take home everything that happens or is said in a classroom, usually in exaggerated terms. Therefore, it is absolutely essential that sound educational practices with appropriate conduct are occurring in every classroom.

It is also necessary that each student feels that they will be treated fairly. It means, too, that teachers must be careful of cynical and sarcastic remarks (little ears overhear everything and don't understand sarcasm.) Teachers should not discuss students in the hallways or cafeteria. Teachers must also not discuss students outside of the school setting. Teachers should also be alert to substitutes, student teachers, and other visitors; students or situations should not be discussed in their presence. Remember that you are talking about someone else's child and you would not want that to happen with your own child. **Confidentiality is always expected.**

## **PURCHASE ORDERS**

All purchases must be made with a purchase order requisition signed by the principal **prior** to the item being purchased. The school will not assume the responsibility of payment of any other debts incurred. This is essential for sound financial management. The purchase orders are on file in the bookkeeper's office. It is the teacher's responsibility to keep up with the PO and return it to Mrs. Allen in a timely manner. State fee money is issued to each teacher each year. This money should be spent on the students in your classroom during that particular school year.

## **SCHEDULES**

At the beginning of each school year every teacher will be given a schedule that reflects the required number of instructional minutes for each subject. All teachers are expected to adhere to their master schedule. A schedule should be posted outside the teacher's door.

## **SCHOOL DAY**

All Russellville City Schools Employees are to arrive at their designated school no later than 7:30 a.m. each day.

School will be in session from 8:00 a.m. until 2:45 p.m. each day

To ensure proper supervision, students should report to the location indicated upon arrival.

7:30 - 7:40 Grade level holding areas  
7:40 - 8:00 Directly to the classroom

Students should not be brought to school before 7:20 a.m. and should **never** be left unattended when the doors are locked. All students who arrive before 7:45 a.m. will report directly to holding areas.

Breakfast will be served in homerooms from 7:40 am – 8:00 am each day. It is free to each student and teacher. Lunch will also be free to all students.

## **SCHOOL NURSE**

Students are not allowed to go to the school nurse without the teacher calling the nurse first. We do not want sick or hurt children wandering the hall if the nurse is not available.

## **SCHOOL SAFETY**

Teachers should know the Crisis Response Safety Plan and be prepared to act in the event of an emergency. Teachers should leave this Plan with lesson plans if a substitute is to be in their classroom. Safety drills will be practiced throughout the year.

## **SCHOOL STORE**

WES sells snacks each morning at the school store. Students should be allowed to buy items from 7:30 – 8:00. Snacks will continue to be sold until 8:15. Teachers are not allowed to sell any items in their classroom. The principal must approve all other items sold at school. WES facilities cannot be used for personal gain.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.)**

Many public schools have placed a negative focus on social media's role in public education. There are clearly some reasons why educators hold this type of skepticism. For example, some teachers have lost jobs because of interactions involving social media. Also, teachers are not covered by school releases when they choose to post student photos on personal social media pages. Educators face the possibility of carrying all of the liability if a problem arises.

What can we do to protect ourselves? First of all, we shouldn't post photos of our students on personal pages. Second, we need to make sure we aren't using social media during school hours when we should be supervising our students, this includes any posts, comments, or "likes" during the school day.

This takes us to the next point. There is no denying social media can have a positive impact on our school. If we want to improve our image with our community, social media can play a vital part. We can use social media to get a message out quickly regarding scheduling changes, event information, etc. Social media is also a great way to publicize positive stories and highlight our school. Because of this, we have a West Elementary School Facebook page (West Elementary School, <https://www.facebook.com/Westatrcs>.) We also have a West Elementary Twitter (@Westatrcs). These sites are used for announcements and news about our school. If you are doing something special in your classroom that you would like highlighted, please send pictures and information to Mrs. Moon or Mrs. Hollimon.

### **STUDENT HANDBOOK**

All teachers should become very familiar with the student handbook.

### **SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS**

Teachers must use the Spur RoleCall service to secure a substitute. If they are unable to secure a substitute, teachers should call the principal or assistant principal. A request for a substitute in RoleCall should be done as soon as possible. The substitute must be provided with a detailed lesson plan for the day's work; therefore, it is necessary to leave on your desk each day detailed lesson plans for the following day, including a substitute guide and a crisis plan. Room keys are provided to the sub by the office and should be returned there. Please keep emergency lesson plans and activities on hand for the substitute teacher in you Sub Tub should you not be able to plan in advance for your absence. Your substitute must also cover any early or late duties that you have been assigned to fulfill.

### **SUPERVISION (Cafeteria/Assemblies)**

Teachers will sit with their students at lunch each day. Teachers are responsible for reminding their students to eat with polite manners and to refrain from using a loud voice. They must also encourage their students to clean up after themselves. Teachers will always take classes to assemblies, seat them together, and sit with them. All teachers are expected to attend assemblies for supervisory purposes. Common area rules and procedures require students to use a whisper voice, if appropriate, and follow the lunch guidelines for noise levels. Respect for property should be taught and modeled daily.

### **SUPERVISION (Halls)**

All teachers are encouraged to help discipline students in the hallways or in other areas of the school. If you see students who are walking in the halls or going to another teacher's classroom and feel the need to address a behavioral problem, you are encouraged to do so. Common area rules and procedures require students to walk in a straight and quiet line in the hallway with no hands on the walls. Respect for property should be taught and modeled daily.

### **SUPERVISION (Playground)**

It is of the utmost importance that students are properly supervised on the playground. Teachers should be positioned where they are able to see all of their students and not all be seated together. Accidents will happen and you should be able to tell parents exactly what happened by what you see. If you feel that a child is injured, please notify our nurse immediately. Respect for property should be taught and modeled daily.

### **SUPERVISION (Restrooms)**

Teachers in pods are expected to help supervise restrooms. If each teacher checks the restroom twice a day, this will ensure restroom cleanliness and accountability. Conduct in the restrooms deteriorates when students are certain no one is going to check it. Pod teachers should work together to ensure that there are not too many students in the restrooms at one time. Any teacher allowing his/her class access to the pod restrooms is responsible for personally checking for cleanliness before and after use by his/her students. Respect for property should be taught and modeled daily.

### **TARDIES (Students)**

1. Students who are not in their room at 8:00a.m. are tardy to school.
2. Students who are tardy to school are to be sent to the office. Excuses are decided as excused or unexcused in the office. The student will be given a tardy slip for admission.

### **TARDIES (Teachers)**

1. ALL teachers should be at work no later than 7:30am. If you are assigned a supervisor for a holding area, please be in that spot by 7:30am.
2. You will receive a verbal warning upon your first tardy and it will be documented.
3. Upon the next tardy, you will be written up with a warning that with another subsequent tardy, the superintendent will be notified.

### **TEACHER EVALUATIONS**

Teachers are evaluated by supervisors according to the EDUCATE Alabama system set forth by the Alabama State Department of Education.

### **TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES (Taken from the Board Policy Manual)**

- Act in a professional and ethical manner, adhere to professional standards at all times, and dress appropriately. Refer to Alabama Code of Ethics (Appendix A) and the Alabama Quality Teaching Standards [http://alex.state.al.us/leadership/alqts\\_full.pdf](http://alex.state.al.us/leadership/alqts_full.pdf).
- Perform assigned duties satisfactorily.
- Demonstrate attention to punctuality, attendance, records and reports.
- Maintain confidentiality of student and other professional information.
- Comply with policies, procedures, and programs. Exercise appropriate professional judgment.
- Support school improvement initiatives by active participation in school activities, services, and programs.
- No teacher shall conduct business from outside jobs during the school day.

- Ensure that student growth and achievement are continuous and appropriate for age group, subject area and/or student program classification.
- Utilize financial resources to maximize student achievement.
- Teachers shall share in the total miscellaneous responsibilities, over and beyond classroom teaching, which are considered either necessary or desirable to the proper functioning of the school program.

### **TEXTBOOKS**

Teachers are responsible for disbursement and collecting textbooks from students. Students who lose or damage a textbook will be required to pay the new book price for the book.

### **VISITORS**

Personal visitors in classrooms during instructional time should be very limited. Teachers should tell family and friends when their planning time is and they may stop by during this time (this includes WES co-workers). Family members/friends should not be “hanging out” in your classroom during instructional time unless it has been approved by the principal for a particular reason. Remember all visitors must sign in at the office before entering the building.

***Public education is often under a microscope and characterized negatively. As employees, I hope we support our school system and each other. If you hear someone making negative comments about our school system, I hope you would try to inform them and highlight positives. This may or may not work in all cases, but it is important to be proud of our profession and our school system.***

***Every person working in our school plays an important role in shaping the lives of our children. The children may not remember everything we teach them, but they will remember how they were treated while they were with us. It is my hope that we would take this to heart throughout our daily interactions with each other and our students.***

## Appendix A

# ***Alabama Educator Code of Ethics***

### **Introduction**

The primary goal of every educator in the state of Alabama must, at all times, be to provide an environment in which all students can learn. In order to accomplish that goal, educators must value the worth and dignity of every person, must have a devotion to excellence in all matters, must actively support the pursuit of knowledge, and must fully participate in the nurturance of a democratic citizenry. To do so requires an adherence to a high ethical standard.

The Alabama Educator Code of Ethics defines the professional behavior of educators in Alabama and serves as a guide to ethical conduct. The code protects the health, safety and general welfare of students and educators; outlines objective standards of conduct for professional educators; and clearly defines actions of an unethical nature for which disciplinary sanctions are justified.

### **Code of Ethics Standards**

#### ***Standard 1: Professional Conduct***

***An educator should demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards.***

Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Encouraging and supporting colleagues in the development and maintenance of high standards.
- Respecting fellow educators and participating in the development of a professional and supportive teaching environment.
- Engaging in a variety of individual and collaborative learning experiences essential to developing professionally in order to promote student learning.

Unethical conduct is any conduct that impairs the certificate holder's ability to function in his or her employment position or a pattern of behavior that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students.

Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Harassment of colleagues.
- Misuse or mismanagement of tests or test materials.

- Inappropriate language on school grounds.
- Physical altercations.
- Failure to provide appropriate supervision of students.

## **Standard 2: Trustworthiness**

**An educator should exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice.**

Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Properly representing facts concerning an educational matter in direct or indirect public expression.
- Advocating for fair and equitable opportunities for all children.
- Embodying for students the characteristics of intellectual honesty, diplomacy, tact, and fairness. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting professional qualifications, criminal record, or employment history when applying for employment or certification.
  - Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information submitted to federal, state, and/or other governmental agencies.
  - Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel.
  - Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting reasons for absences or leaves.
  - Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information submitted in the course of an official inquiry or investigation.

## **Standard 3: Unlawful Acts**

**An educator should abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the commission or conviction of a felony or of any crime involving moral turpitude. As used herein, conviction includes a finding or verdict of guilty, or a plea of *nolo contendere*, regardless of whether an appeal of the conviction has been sought or a situation where first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt pursuant to the charge was granted.**

#### **Standard 4: Teacher/Student Relationship**

***An educator should always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom.***

Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Fulfilling the roles of trusted confidante, mentor, and advocate for students' growth.
- Nurturing the intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and civic potential of all students.
- Providing an environment that does not needlessly expose students to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
- Creating, supporting, and maintaining a challenging learning environment for all students. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - Committing any act of child abuse, including physical or verbal abuse.
  - Committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment.
  - Committing or soliciting any unlawful sexual act.
  - Engaging in harassing behavior on the basis of race, gender, national origin, religion, or disability.
  - Soliciting, encouraging, or consummating an inappropriate written, verbal, or physical relationship with a student.
  - Furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student or allowing a student to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs.

#### **Standard 5: Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco Use or Possession**

***An educator should refrain from the use of alcohol and/or tobacco during the course of professional practice and should never use illegal or unauthorized drugs.***

Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Factually representing the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and illegal drug use and abuse to students during the course of professional practice.

Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Being under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs.
- Being on school premises or at a school-related activity involving students while documented as being under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcoholic

beverages or using tobacco. A school-related activity includes, but is not limited to, any activity that is sponsored by a school or a school system or any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum such as club trips, etc., where students are involved.

### **Standard 6: Public Funds and Property**

***An educator entrusted with public funds and property should honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility.***

Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Maximizing the positive effect of school funds through judicious use of said funds.
- Modeling for students and colleagues the responsible use of public property.

Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Misusing public or school-related funds.
- Failing to account for funds collected from students or parents.
- Submitting fraudulent requests for reimbursement of expenses or for pay.
- Co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts.
- Using school property without the approval of the local board of education/governing body.

### **Standard 7: Remunerative Conduct**

***An educator should maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation.***

Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Insuring that institutional privileges are not used for personal gain.
- Insuring that school policies or procedures are not impacted by gifts or gratuities from any person or organization.

Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Soliciting students or parents of students to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local governing body.
- Accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where

- there appears to be a conflict of interest.
- Tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local board of education.

### **Standard 8: Maintenance of Confidentiality**

***An educator should comply with state and federal laws and local school board policies relating to confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material, and other information covered by confidentiality agreements.***

Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Keeping in confidence information about students that has been obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.
- Maintaining diligently the security of standardized test supplies and resources.

Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

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

### **Standard 9: Abandonment of Contract**

***An educator should fulfill all of the terms and obligations detailed in the contract with the local board of education or educational agency for the duration of the contract.***

Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Abandoning the contract for professional services without prior release from the contract by the employer
- Refusing to perform services required by the contract.

## Reporting

Educators are required to report a breach of one or more of the Standards in the Alabama Educator Code of Ethics as soon as possible, but no later than sixty (60) days from the date the educator became aware of the alleged breach, unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. Educators should be aware of their local school board policies and procedures and/or chain of command for reporting unethical conduct. Complaints filed with the local or state school boards, or with the State Department of Education Teacher Certification Section, must be filed in writing and must include the original signature of the complainant.

*Alabama Administrative Code 290-3-2-.05(1)-5-c* Each Superintendent shall submit to the State Superintendent of Education within ten calendar days of the decision, the name and social security number of each employee holding an Alabama certificate or license who is terminated, or nonrenewed, resigns, or is placed on administrative leave for cause, and shall indicate the reason for such action.

## Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action shall be defined as the issuance of a reprimand or warning, or the suspension, revocation, or denial of certificates. "Certificate" refers to any teaching, service, or leadership certificate issued by the authority of the Alabama State Department of Education.

*Alabama Administrative Code 290-3-2-.05*

### (1) Authority of the State Superintendent of Education

(a) The Superintendent shall have the authority under existing legal standards to:

1. Revoke any certificate held by a person who has been proven guilty of immoral conduct or unbecoming or indecent behavior in Alabama or any other state or nation in accordance with Ala. Code §16-23-5 (1975).
2. Refuse to issue a certificate to an applicant whose certificate has been subject to adverse action by another state until after the adverse action has been resolved by that state.
3. Suspend or revoke an individual's certificate issued by the Superintendent when a certificate or license issued by another state is subject to adverse action.
4. Refuse to issue, suspend, or recall a certificate for just cause.

Any of the following grounds shall also be considered cause for disciplinary action:

- Unethical conduct as outlined in the Alabama Educator Code of Ethics, Standards 1-9.
- Order from a court of competent jurisdiction.

- Violation of any other laws or rules applicable to the profession.
- Any other good and sufficient cause.

An individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended may not be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, or substitute teacher during the period of his or her revocation, suspension, or denial.

***“Great vision without great people  
is irrelevant.”***

~ James C. Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Others Don't*