

# **Wesley International Academy**

## **Personnel Handbook**



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Welcome to Wesley! For more than a decade, Wesley students have been pursuing their education, growing as global citizens, and building lifelong friendships in our hallways and classrooms. I am excited as a new year begins and students once again lean into the opportunities to reinforce their academic foundations while also stretching to new heights. Wesley is an International Baccalaureate school, and this framework guides our vision to foster young global citizens who are academically competitive by international standards of excellence. In addition, we provide daily Mandarin instruction, giving our students the opportunity to learn and understand another language and culture.

We are a unique school, and we are supported by a top-notch network of students, parents, staff, and community members committed to the education and nurture of our student body. Together we are working hard to make Wesley the best school it can be. Every day is a chance to experiment, to learn, to try again, and to achieve. In this Handbook, you will find more information about our school and policies. Dive in and learn more about the ins-and-outs of our school. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to myself or our PYP and MYP Principals. I'm glad you're here!

Jason Marshall  
Executive Director

# The Foundation of Wesley International Academy

## Wesley's Vision:

Wesley International Academy develops students who are global citizens and are academically competitive by international standards of excellence.

## Wesley's Mission:

Wesley International Academy develops in students the discipline of learning and a life-long desire for knowledge through a world class International Baccalaureate education.

## Core beliefs of the Wesley International Academy Board of Education

- Our core business is teaching and learning.
- All children should reach their learning potential.
- The school's effect is important and has a profound impact on every child's life.
- A quality instructional program requires a rigorous curriculum, effective teaching, and ongoing assessment.
- All children should be taught in a safe and secure learning environment.

# Strategic Directions



**Direction #1:**  
WIA will recruit, grow, and retain a highly satisfied, high performing staff.

- Priority 1: Develop recruiting, vetting, and onboarding practices to secure hire the highest-capacity staff.
- Priority 2: Provide individualized professional goals and support at all levels of the organization.
- Priority 3: Use staff feedback to inform strategies that promote satisfaction and retention.
- Priority 4: Develop a leadership development process for staff and succession plan for leadership roles.

Success will look like:

- High rates of staff retention and satisfaction
- Demonstrable growth in capacity for all staff members



**Direction #2:**  
WIA will out-perform similar schools in the state.

- Priority 1: Improve assessment performance in core content areas by whole school, grade level, content area, and subgroups.
- Priority 2: Increase student opportunities, participation, and performance in Chinese, Music, Physical Education, Technology, and Art.
- Priority 3: Use data to drive decision-making by leadership and individual staff members around planning, instruction, and professional development.

Success will look like:

- Beating the Odds designations
- Assessment performance that is higher than the state
- Increased participation in high quality arts and athletics opportunities



**Direction #3:**  
WIA will define and implement a clear, consistent IB culture for all students and staff.

- Priority 1: Collect and use data on culture and behavior to drive professional development and decision-making.
- Priority 2: Develop and implement a tiered, K-8 approach to IB culture and discipline that empowers all students to succeed.
- Priority 3: Provide intensive support that empowers all teachers to implement model IB classroom cultures.

Success will look like:

- Reduced disruption and disciplinary infractions
- Increased self-governance and success for all students
- Increased staff capacity to facilitate IB classroom culture



**Direction #4:**  
WIA will increase its financial and partnership resources.

- Priority 1: Create an annual development plan that projects ambitious annual fundraising growth.
- Priority 2: Raise capital to address long-term facility needs.
- Priority 3: Increase the resources (funding, partnerships, grants, and opportunities) for students to build IB leadership experiences and skills.

Success will look like:

- Increased revenue
- More high-quality partnerships and opportunities for students, staff, and families
- Facility resources that will accommodate the school program

**We, the Board of Education, believe that pursuing these attributes will move us closer to our vision of being a world-class IB school.**

## **Message from the Board of Education**

Dear Wesley Faculty & Staff,

It is with great excitement that I begin my tenure as Chair of the Board of Directors of Wesley International Academy during this 2018-19 school year, just as we embark on a new five-year charter term. Having worked hand in hand with the school leaders to complete our recent charter renewal application process, I am confident that, together, we will achieve all that is now laid out before us.

This school year also marks a shift in the features of our school as we move away from single-gender classrooms to a co-educational setting. This shift will allow for greater flexibility in our teaching models and we anticipate it will contribute to enhanced academic performance as well as an improved school climate. Of course we maintain the world-class International Baccalaureate framework that we have so successfully implemented in both the primary and middle years programmes throughout the life of our school. Our rigorous Mandarin Chinese instruction is also a mainstay of our daily instruction and we delight in seeing more and more students excel in their mastery of this beautiful language.

Our board is committed to seeing Wesley students developed to be global citizens who are academically competitive by international standards of excellence. We are confident that in partnership with the entire Wesley community – families, students, teachers, faculty, and our community neighbors – we will see our students thriving as they develop both a discipline of learning and a life-long desire for knowledge.

As we begin anew this charter term, we welcome you to join us on the journey by serving on one of our four board committees and attending our regular monthly meetings. We look forward to a charter term marked by excellence, growth, and achievement.

Sincerely,

Mazie Lynn Causey, Chair  
Wesley International Academy  
Board of Directors

## **Communication with Employees and the Community**

Employee's achievements and best practices in the classroom are recognized through internal communication vehicles. In addition, employee achievements at the state and national level may be publicized through press releases prepared by the Committee of Communication & Media Relations for distribution to all metro-area media. Any employee may submit information for recognition by sending it to the Committee of Communication & Media Relations.

The Teacher Advisory Council (TAC) at Wesley may make recommendations to the Executive Director and the Board. Any employee may give input on policy and budget by attending the School Board's committee meetings and/or the monthly meetings held the third Tuesday of every month.

Parents and citizens have direct channels to provide input to their School Board representatives through attendance at monthly Board meetings and at Board meetings held throughout the year. Wesley International shares information through the parent newsletter, through e-newsletters; and via the school's website.

### **Strategic Priority for Communication**

The school will promote open, honest, reliable, two-way communication that builds trust and confidence within the school community. We will share accurate, timely, and relevant information with stakeholders through appropriate communication vehicles. We will be committed to public engagement so that students, parents, staff, and community members will be well informed and able to provide meaningful input regarding district issues. The school will overcome communication challenges such as those associated with growth, language differences, and access to technology. Communication will promote and reinforce the school's reputation, conveying a clear and compelling story of our instructional and operational successes. Effective communication will be everyone's responsibility.

## **Employee Development**

Individuals employed by The Board of Education of Wesley International Academy are selected by a systematic personnel screening process, designed to identify highly qualified candidates. This same commitment to quality is reflected as the school plans for the enhancement of the skills and competencies of the employees. Professional growth opportunities are coordinated by the principal and/or Assistant principal of the school.

### ***Staff development***

Wesley International Academy provides professional growth opportunities, products, and services that are designed to advance the school's vision, mission, and goals; to enhance employee performance; and to develop employee capacity to lead in a world-class school. We are committed to the development and support of professional learning that is research-based, data-driven, student-focused, continuous, and sustainable over time.

Our commitment and belief that learning is a life-long journey is evident in our **Board Policy, which requires employees to earn 20 staff development hours annually**. These hours must be aligned with the vision, mission and goals of the Board of Education and/or area of certification. It is the responsibility of the teacher to seek out professional development opportunities. Please confer with your administrator for available opportunities, as all professional development should have the approval of administration.

### ***Leadership Development***

The Leadership Development Department of APS, local area Charter schools, or Wesley International Academy Board of Education will provide training and development for Wesley leadership staff.

### ***Performance Appraisal***

Wesley International Academy is committed to performance assessment that encourages continuous quality improvement for all employees. All personnel shall have their performance evaluated annually as required by Georgia Code §20-2-210. Certified educators are assessed under the TKES program which assesses based on a 4 point rubric as well as the growth and achievement of students. Please see the following rubric for more information or visit the GA Department of Education for more information (<http://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Teacher-and-Leader-Effectiveness/Pages/Teacher-Keys-Effectiveness-System.aspx>)





Georgia Department of Education • TAPS Performance Standards and Rubrics

**Performance Standard 1: Professional Knowledge**  
 The teacher demonstrates an understanding of the curriculum, subject content, pedagogical knowledge, and the needs of students by providing relevant learning experiences.

Level IV <i>In addition to meeting the requirements for Level III</i>	Level III <i>Level III is the expected level of performance.</i>	Level II	Level I
The teacher continually demonstrates extensive content and pedagogical knowledge, enriches the curriculum, and guides others in enriching the curriculum. <i>(Teachers rated as Level IV continually seek ways to serve as role models or teacher leaders.)</i>	The teacher consistently demonstrates an understanding of the curriculum, subject content, pedagogical knowledge, and the needs of students by providing relevant learning experiences.	The teacher inconsistently demonstrates understanding of curriculum, subject content, pedagogical knowledge, and student needs, or lacks fluidity in using the knowledge in practice.	The teacher inadequately demonstrates understanding of curriculum, subject content, pedagogical knowledge and student needs, or does not use the knowledge in practice.

**Performance Standard 2: Instructional Planning**  
 The teacher plans using state and local school district curricula and standards, effective strategies, resources, and data to address the differentiated needs of all students.

Level IV <i>In addition to meeting the requirements for Level III</i>	Level III <i>Level III is the expected level of performance.</i>	Level II	Level I
The teacher continually seeks and uses multiple data and real world resources to plan differentiated instruction to meet the individual student needs and interests in order to promote student accountability and engagement. <i>(Teachers rated as Level IV continually seek ways to serve as role models or teacher leaders.)</i>	The teacher consistently plans using state and local school district curricula and standards, effective strategies, resources, and data to address the differentiated needs of all students.	The teacher inconsistently uses state and local school district curricula and standards, or inconsistently uses effective strategies, resources, or data in planning to meet the needs of all students.	The teacher does not plan, or plans without adequately using state and local school district curricula and standards, or without using effective strategies, resources, or data to meet the needs of all students.

**Performance Standard 3: Instructional Strategies**  
 The teacher promotes student learning by using research-based instructional strategies relevant to the content to engage students in active learning and to facilitate the students' acquisition of key knowledge and skills.

Level IV <i>In addition to meeting the requirements for Level III</i>	Level III <i>Level III is the expected level of performance.</i>	Level II	Level I
The teacher continually facilitates students' engagement in metacognitive learning, higher-order thinking skills, and application of learning in current and relevant ways. <i>(Teachers rated as Level IV continually seek ways to serve as role models or teacher leaders.)</i>	The teacher consistently promotes student learning by using research-based instructional strategies relevant to the content to engage students in active learning, and to facilitate the students' acquisition of key skills.	The teacher inconsistently uses research-based instructional strategies. The strategies used are sometimes not appropriate for the content area or for engaging students in active learning or for the acquisition of key skills.	The teacher does not use research-based instructional strategies, nor are the instructional strategies relevant to the content area. The strategies do not engage students in active learning or acquisition of key skills.

**Performance Standard 4: Differentiated Instruction**  
 The teacher challenges and supports each student's learning by providing appropriate content and developing skills which address individual learning differences.

Level IV <i>In addition to meeting the requirements for Level III</i>	Level III <i>Level III is the expected level of performance.</i>	Level II	Level I
The teacher continually facilitates each student's opportunities to learn by engaging him/her in critical and creative thinking and challenging activities tailored to address individual learning needs and interests. <i>(Teachers rated as Level IV continually seek ways to serve as role models or teacher leaders.)</i>	The teacher consistently challenges and supports each student's learning by providing appropriate content and developing skills which address individual learning differences.	The teacher inconsistently challenges students by providing appropriate content or by developing skills which address individual learning differences.	The teacher does not challenge students by providing appropriate content or by developing skills which address individual learning differences.

**Performance Standard 5: Assessment Strategies**  
 The teacher systematically chooses a variety of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment strategies and instruments that are valid and appropriate for the content and student population.

Level IV <i>In addition to meeting the requirements for Level III</i>	Level III <i>Level III is the expected level of performance.</i>	Level II	Level I
The teacher continually demonstrates expertise and leads others to determine and develop a variety of strategies and instruments that are valid and appropriate for the content and student population and guides students to monitor and reflect on their own academic progress. <i>(Teachers rated as Level IV continually seek ways to serve as role models or teacher leaders.)</i>	The teacher systematically and consistently chooses a variety of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment strategies and instruments that are valid and appropriate for the content and student population.	The teacher inconsistently chooses a variety of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment strategies or the instruments are sometimes not appropriate for the content or student population.	The teacher chooses an inadequate variety of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment strategies or the instruments are not appropriate for the content or student population.

Georgia Department of Education · TAPS Performance Standards and Rubrics

<b>Performance Standard 6: Assessment Uses</b> <i>The teacher systematically gathers, analyzes, and uses relevant data to measure student progress, to inform instructional content and delivery methods, and to provide timely and constructive feedback to both students and parents.</i>			
<b>Level IV</b> <i>In addition to meeting the requirements for Level III</i>	<b>Level III</b> <i>Level III is the expected level of performance.</i>	<b>Level II</b>	<b>Level I</b>
The teacher continually demonstrates expertise in using data to measure student progress and leads others in the effective use of data to inform instructional decisions. <i>(Teachers rated as Level IV continually seek ways to serve as role models or teacher leaders.)</i>	The teacher systematically and consistently gathers, analyzes, and uses relevant data to measure student progress, to inform instructional content and delivery methods, and to provide timely and constructive feedback to both students and parents.	The teacher inconsistently gathers, analyzes, or uses relevant data to measure student progress, inconsistently uses data to inform instructional content and delivery methods, or inconsistently provides timely or constructive feedback.	The teacher does not gather, analyze, or use relevant data to measure student progress, to inform instructional content and delivery methods, or to provide feedback in a constructive or timely manner.
<b>Performance Standard 7: Positive Learning Environment</b> <i>The teacher provides a well-managed, safe, and orderly environment that is conducive to learning and encourages respect for all.</i>			
<b>Level IV</b> <i>In addition to meeting the requirements for Level III</i>	<b>Level III</b> <i>Level III is the expected level of performance.</i>	<b>Level II</b>	<b>Level I</b>
The teacher continually engages students in a collaborative and self-directed learning environment where students are encouraged to take risks and ownership of their own learning behavior. <i>(Teachers rated as Level IV continually seek ways to serve as role models or teacher leaders.)</i>	The teacher consistently provides a well-managed, safe, and orderly environment that is conducive to learning and encourages respect for all.	The teacher inconsistently provides a well-managed, safe, and orderly environment that is conducive to learning and encourages respect for all.	The teacher inadequately addresses student behavior, displays a negative attitude toward students, ignores safety standards, or does not otherwise provide an orderly environment that is conducive to learning or encourages respect for all.
<b>Performance Standard 8: Academically Challenging Environment</b> <i>The teacher creates a student-centered, academic environment in which teaching and learning occur at high levels and students are self-directed learners.</i>			
<b>Level IV</b> <i>In addition to meeting the requirements for Level III</i>	<b>Level III</b> <i>Level III is the expected level of performance.</i>	<b>Level II</b>	<b>Level I</b>
The teacher continually creates an academic learning environment where students are encouraged to set challenging learning goals and tackle challenging materials. <i>(Teachers rated as Level IV continually seek ways to serve as role models or teacher leaders.)</i>	The teacher consistently creates a student-centered, academic environment in which teaching and learning occur at high levels and students are self-directed learners.	The teacher inconsistently provides a student-centered, academic environment in which teaching and learning occur at high levels or where students are self-directed learners.	The teacher does not provide a student-centered, academic environment in which teaching and learning occur at high levels, or where students are self-directed learners.
<b>Performance Standard 9: Professionalism</b> <i>The teacher exhibits a commitment to professional ethics and the school’s mission, participates in professional growth opportunities to support student learning, and contributes to the profession.</i>			
<b>Level IV</b> <i>In addition to meeting the requirements for Level III</i>	<b>Level III</b> <i>Level III is the expected level of performance.</i>	<b>Level II</b>	<b>Level I</b>
The teacher continually engages in a high level of professional growth and application of skills and contributes to the development of others and the well-being of the school and community. <i>(Teachers rated as Level IV continually seek ways to serve as role models or teacher leaders.)</i>	The teacher consistently exhibits a commitment to professional ethics and the school’s mission, participates in professional growth opportunities to support student learning, and contributes to the profession.	The teacher inconsistently supports the school’s mission or seldom participates in professional growth opportunities.	The teacher shows a disregard toward professional ethics or the school’s mission or rarely takes advantage of professional growth opportunities.
<b>Performance Standard 10: Communication</b> <i>The teacher communicates effectively with students, parents or guardians, district and school personnel, and other stakeholders in ways that enhance student learning.</i>			
<b>Level IV</b> <i>In addition to meeting the requirements for Level III</i>	<b>Level III</b> <i>Level III is the expected level of performance.</i>	<b>Level II</b>	<b>Level I</b>
The teacher continually uses communication techniques in a variety of situations to proactively inform, network, and collaborate with stakeholders to enhance student learning. <i>(Teachers rated as Level IV continually seek ways to serve as role models or teacher leaders.)</i>	The teacher communicates effectively and consistently with students, parents or guardians, district and school personnel, and other stakeholders in ways that enhance student learning.	The teacher inconsistently communicates with students, parents or guardians, district and school personnel, or other stakeholders or communicates in ways that only partially enhance student learning.	The teacher inadequately communicates with students, parents or guardians, district and school personnel, or other stakeholders by poorly acknowledging concerns, responding to inquiries, or encouraging involvement.

*The contents of this form were developed under a grant from the U. S. Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U. S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.*

***Certification***

It is the responsibility of all certified employees to maintain valid in-field Georgia certification. It is also the expectation that any uncertified teacher will obtain a valid Georgia certification. Certification forms and information are available at the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GPSC) website, <http://www.gapsc.com/>.

All paraprofessionals must hold a Paraprofessional Certificate issued by the Georgia PSC. Certification requirements may be found at the Georgia PSC website, <http://www.gapsc.com/>.

***Employee Recognition***

Wesley employees frequently receive recognition for awards and achievements of various national, state, and local accomplishments. Professional associations regularly recognize teachers for their excellence. Additionally, our school chooses a "Teacher of the Year" from a pool of nominated teachers during the fall/winter.

School system newsletters, prepared by the Communication and Media Relations Committee, highlight employee honors. In addition, Wesley shares employee and school accomplishments with local news media.

## **Compensation**

To attract and retain the most qualified teachers and support personnel, Wesley International Academy maintains competitive salaries by conducting regular individual job and market analysis of Metro Atlanta school districts, as well as Metro Atlanta employers.

### ***Payday / Direct Deposit***

Most employees are paid biweekly or monthly with earning statements issued online. Employees may sign up for direct deposit through the payroll office.

### ***Penalty for Failure to Provide Certification***

The employment contracts issued to certified staff are contingent upon the employee securing and continuing to hold a valid in-field certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, and shall be considered void if this condition is not satisfied. Salary adjustments will be made to conform to the certificate level approved by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. If the employee is unable to be certified properly, the daily rate of pay may be adjusted to that of a substitute employee retroactive to the beginning of employment under the contract.

### ***Penalty for Failure to Meet Contractual Obligation***

If fewer than twenty days of service are rendered under contract, the daily rate may be equal to the substitute teacher rate.

### ***Paid Holidays***

New Year's Day  
Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
Spring Holidays  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Thanksgiving Holidays  
Winter Holidays (see calendar)

\*Fall Break (see calendar)

\*Winter Break (see calendar)

**\* To be determined on a yearly basis**

## **Benefits**

Benefits are a large part of the total compensation package for employees. In order to meet the ever-changing needs of our employees, we are continuously reviewing and updating these benefits and their features. The following is an overview of the benefits provided by Wesley International Board of Education.

Open Enrollment (OE) is the period each year when employees may enroll or change options or coverage, subject to the conditions described in the plan. The OE period, unless otherwise announced, occurs mid-October through mid-November of each calendar year. Coverage changes or enrollments become effective the following January 1.

It is the responsibility of the employee to notify the Benefits Administrator of any changes in the number of dependents and/or the names of beneficiaries.

**Insurance Plans**

Insurance benefits become effective on the first day of the month following the completion of one full calendar month of employment. Temporary employees (regular substitutes and miscellaneous employees) or employees who work less than 20 hours per week are not eligible for benefits.

**Health Insurance**

Benefit Information on all plans is available from the Benefits Administration Office.

**Dental Insurance**

Late entrant restrictions may apply to employees who decline enrollment at the time of hire and enroll through a subsequent Open Enrollment, or for those employees who dropped dental coverage and re-elected coverage at a later Open Enrollment.

**Vision Insurance**

A complete description of services provided by the plan is available at the Benefits Administration Office.

**Life Insurance**

Benefit eligible employees are automatically covered by a \$15,000 group term Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment policy provided by the Board at no cost to the employee, and underwritten by Metropolitan Life Insurance Company (MetLife). Additionally, an employee may purchase Supplemental Life insurance up to six times his/her annual salary, up to \$500,000. Employees may also purchase a \$5,000, \$10,000, or \$15,000 dependent life insurance policy.

**Disability Insurance**

Voluntary Short-Term Disability coverage is available on a payroll deduction basis.

**Critical Illness/Cancer Plus**

Benefit eligible employees may enroll in the Critical Illness/Cancer Plus insurance plan, which supplements health care and disability plans by helping with costs associated with a critical illness. Benefits are paid directly to the employee in a lump sum when diagnosis of a covered illness is confirmed. The specific covered illnesses include heart attack, stroke, major organ transplant, end-stage renal failure, and internal cancer. Coverage amounts are in \$5,000 increments, ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000, and rates are age-banded.

**Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA)**

Wesley employees may deduct up to \$5,000 in pre-tax dollars per plan year to pay for eligible non-reimbursed health care expenses and qualifying dependent care expenses. Special care must be taken in predicting out-of-pocket expenses for either the health care or dependent care plans as any unused portion of both FSA will be forfeited at the end of the plan year. The entire election for the health care FSA is available on the first day of the plan year as services are provided. Dependent Care expenses are reimbursed up to the accumulated payroll deductions, as services are provided. Detailed information on both FSA plans, and lists of eligible expenses, can be found at Benefits Administration Office.

**Other Benefits**

For information and contact numbers for these plans and services, access the Benefits Administration Office.

**Teachers Retirement System of Georgia (TRS)**

Teachers, administrators, supervisors, clerical employees, paraprofessionals are eligible members of TRS. Benefits become available after 30 years of service, regardless of age, at 25 years of service with early retirement penalties, or at age 60, after ten years of service. Employees who have 9 1/2 years of service earn disability retirement benefits if permanently disabled, as well as survivor's benefits that are paid to a

beneficiary. Effective July 1, 2011, employees contribute 5.53% of their eligible earnings and the school system contributes 10.28%. Additional information about TRS is available at <http://www.trsga.com>.

***Public School Employees Retirement System of Georgia (PSERS)***

Bus drivers, food service employees, some non-supervisory maintenance and custodial personnel, and other employees not eligible for membership in TRS are eligible for membership in the Public School Employees Retirement System. Retirement benefits are available for members who are 60 years of age with at least ten years of creditable service. Members contribute \$4.00 per month for nine months each year, and the state makes the employer's contribution. Further information is available at <http://www.ers.ga.gov>.

***Medicare***

All employees hired after April 1, 1986, are required to pay Medicare contributions, which provide the medical benefits within the Social Security Administration.

***Liability Insurance***

The Board of Education provides professional liability insurance for its employees, which may provide for legal expenses and damages that may arise from suits brought against employees for incidents that occur while they are carrying out assigned duties of the district.

***Workers' Compensation***

Employees may be entitled to Workers' Compensation benefits if injured on the job. The injury must arise out of and in the course of employment. The injured employee must provide notice of the injury immediately, but no later than 30 days after the accident, to the employer, the employer's representative, or the employee's immediate supervisor. Failure to do so may result in the loss of benefits. The injured employee may select a medical care provider from the list posted by the Board of Education. Only those providers listed are authorized to provide medical care for a work-related injury. The Panel of Physicians is posted in conspicuous places in all locations maintained by the Board of Education and may be obtained through the Risk Management Manager.

Generally, employees are not eligible for Workers' Compensation benefits for injuries sustained: going to or coming from work; during deviations from the scope of employment (e.g., employee making a delivery drives to a place unconnected to the employment); as a consequence of imported danger (e.g., employee's own attire or a personal weapon causes injury to self); an employee engaging in a prohibited act; an employee engaging in horseplay; during recreational or social activities; and during times in which the employee is not subject to the employer's control (e.g., not on the premises, not during the regularly scheduled work day). Questions may be addressed to an immediate supervisor.

## ***Policies and Procedures***

Wesley International Academy recognizes the importance of meeting employee needs and utilizing employee abilities. For effective district operations, it is necessary that sound personnel policies are known and understood by all employees. These policies ensure consistency and fairness for all employees.

Policy modifications and clarifications are subject to change. These changes are communicated to employees through memos, administrative bulletins, meetings, electronic retrieval, and publications. Policies summarized in this book are meant to provide employees with only a general overview of Board policy related to personnel.

This handbook, the salary schedule, and references to the number of days to be worked should not be considered an employment contract. Since it is the responsibility of each employee to understand WIA Board policies and administrative procedures, if clarification of information contained in policies and procedures is needed, an immediate supervisor should be contacted for assistance.

A listing of each section of Board policies may be accessed on the **WIA website** at <http://www.wesleyacademy.org>

### ***Equal Opportunity Employment (Policy)***

It is the policy of the Board not to discriminate based on gender, age, race, color, disability, religion, or national origin in any educational program or other program, activity, or service or admissions to facilities operated by the Board or in the employment practices of the Board. It is the express policy of the Board to comply with all appropriate laws and regulations relating to discrimination now in effect or hereafter enacted including Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and all accompanying regulations.

### ***Employee Background Checks (Policy)***

All personnel must be fingerprinted and successfully complete a criminal background check. Teachers, principals, and other certified personnel will also have a criminal background check made upon any certificate renewal application to the Professional Standards Commission. Non-certified personnel shall also have criminal background checks on a periodic basis, not to exceed every five years, using procedures and schedules to be determined by the Board of Education or his/her designee.

### ***Contracts***

Contracts for certified employees and other Board-approved personnel are issued for no more than one school year. For new, certified employees, a temporary contract for up to 20 days is issued pending the results from the criminal background check. An employee who holds a contract for less than one full year will not necessarily be offered a full contract for the ensuing year.

### ***Reduction in Force***

A reduction in force may occur for the following reasons: inadequate funds; loss of funding that includes the reduction or expiration of grant generated funds; insufficient student enrollment to merit continuation of a program or service; decline in average daily attendance; decline in need for services rendered by a position classification; return of contractual personnel from extended leave; discontinuation of a program by action of the Board; change in class sizes; closure of change in purpose of a school or program; reorganization; legislative mandates; judicial decrees; other exigencies. The determination of employees to be demoted or terminated is based upon approved procedures established by the Board administration.

**Employees who do not have a written contract are classified as “at-will.” Either the employee or WIA may terminate the employment of “at-will” employees at any time with or without cause.**

***Identification and Security Badges***

All full-time employees of WIA will have picture identification badges. The badge allows the employee to be admitted to all WIA activities and to receive certain specified merchant discounts. When an employee terminates, his/her direct supervisor should inform the Benefits and Leave Administration Office to ensure any security access is canceled upon termination. Badges for terminated employees should be returned to the Benefits and Leave Administration Clerk.

***Conflicts of Interest (Policy)***

Employees should be aware of situations and activities that may be construed as a conflict of interest.

***Endorsements***

WIA employees carry the responsibility of being a representative of the school. Employees should be aware that decisions and actions that could be interpreted as written or oral endorsements of a product or service should be considered in light of whether the action may be interpreted as a conflict of interest.

No employee of the Wesley International Academy shall give a written or oral endorsement to any company or representative for promotional purposes for any periodical, book, or product that may be offered for sale to schools, parents, or pupils in his/her charge. Actions that could be construed as a conflict of interest or a violation of the Code of Ethics for Educators may jeopardize the staff member’s employment relationship with WIA.

***Non-School Employment***

WIA employees are reminded that their job assignments within the school are their first obligation and if outside employment is taking time or energy from this position or affecting their performance, they will be asked to choose one or the other.

Each principal/supervisor has direct responsibility for evaluating the effects of outside employment on personnel assigned. Employees seeking employment in any private business or outside activity during the term of their contract shall first receive permission from their respective principal/supervisor before entering into such supplementary employment.

***Tutoring***

Teachers may **NOT** offer private instruction on a fee basis to any student who is presently enrolled in their classes. It is the expectation that teachers will be available for extra help for students at least one day per week.

It is preferred that a tutor be a person who is not on the staff of the school in which a student is enrolled. Tutoring must be done in such a way as not to interfere with the orderly routine of the teacher's regular day and school responsibilities.

***Dual Pay***

Employees shall be prohibited from receiving dual pay for services rendered during the regular working hours. The employee must forfeit the regular pay or the pay from another agency, organization, or individual. Employees may receive payment for services rendered while on non-medical leave or for services performed other than during the regular working day.

***Political Involvement***

The Board recognizes that employees have the same civic responsibilities and privileges as any other citizen including the privilege of campaigning for and holding public office and actively supporting



candidates and causes in the political arena. The Board also recognizes that the school is entrusted by the citizens of the city, county, and the state of Georgia with a vitally important public mission and that an employee's political activities **must not interfere or conflict with an employee's job** or with the best interest of the school.

An employee who participates actively in a political activity cannot be promoted, demoted, transferred, or terminated solely because of his/her political participation as long as such actions follow the guidelines stated in this policy.

However, no school employee may actively campaign for **ANY** candidate on school grounds as it is prohibited.

### ***Personnel Attire (Policy)***

The expectation of the Board is that all staff members dress in a **professional** manner. Dress should be appropriate for the position.

The minimum standards of professional appearance for employees shall be as follows: During the work day and any time employees attend work-related activities, they shall exhibit a professional appearance. Examples of clothing fostering a professional appearance include: collared shirts; dress slacks; khakis; dress coordinates, suits, dresses, ties and sports coats. Exceptions include those positions that have specified separate dress expectations, such as physical education teachers who must wear athletic-wear daily.

#### **Unacceptable Clothing Items:**

- Rain boots/Ugg boots (for the entire workday)
- Flip flops
- Off-colored jeans (must be denim, gray or black)
- Spaghetti strapped clothing items
- Halter tops/tank tops
- Leggings (as a singular and/or primary outfit component)
- Jumpsuits
- Shorts
- Clothing that is too short or too tight

#### ***Special Assignments***

Some job assignments, such as working with students who have disabilities and who lack the ability to care for themselves, require interactions with students that warrant dress different than that which is appropriate for a normal work assignment. Employees who have questions regarding acceptable dress resulting from their job assignment should consult the Executive Director.

#### ***Enforcement***

The Executive Director is responsible for enforcing the standards of professional appearance based on his/her evaluation of the impact an individual's appearance has upon the school climate, educational process, or the school's image in the community. The Executive Director, or his designee, shall make the final determination as to the appropriateness of staff dress. NOTE:

The Executive Director and Principals reserve the right to send a staff member home to change their attire when the professional dress code is violated.

For staff members who violate the general expectations for attire, the following represents the process of progressive management and corrective action.

Step 1: Verbal warning

Step 2: Written warning

Step 3: Administrative write-up

Step 4: Suspension without pay (1 to 3 days)

Step 5: Termination

*Employees who have specific questions about a garment's acceptability should consult the Executive Director.*

### ***Spirit Days***

Throughout the year, WIA has "Casual Fridays" and/or "Spirit Days." Clothing considered acceptable for these designated days includes the following: jeans; non-collared shirts with the school logo or school colors; high school or college spirit wear; athletic shoes; other items deemed appropriate by the local school administration. Clothing considered acceptable for "Spirit Day" include those items which are appropriate for "Casual Friday" if that dress supports the theme of the specific spirit day as deemed appropriate by the local school administration.

### ***Personnel Time Schedule (Policy)***

All full-time employees of the Board of Education work a minimum 40 hours per week. The principal or program manager sets a schedule within this policy for the time of arrival and departure of all employees assigned to his/her operation.

In order for an organization to achieve its desired goals, **good attendance and punctuality are necessary.** Therefore, regular and prompt attendance is expected and required of all employees. If it is necessary to be absent or late to work, employees are responsible for contacting their supervisor at least one day in advance, if possible.

In case of emergency or other circumstances when it is impossible to give advance notice, employees are responsible for contacting their supervisor or designee before time to report to work.

### ***Leave***

Wesley recognizes that our employees will encounter personal situations that may require employees to take time away from their job. Our leave options are designed to not only be flexible and consistent with employee needs but also to comply with state and federal laws.

#### ***Sick Leave***

Sick leave for full-time employees is earned at the rate of **4 hours per month** times the number of months worked (example: 5 days for certified staff/10 month). Sick leave may be accumulated up to a maximum of 1200 hours (150 days). An employee must be at work or on paid leave at least 13 days within a month to earn sick leave for that month. Employees working less than 40 hours per week earn a prorated share

of sick leave. Temporary employees (substitutes and miscellaneous employees) or employees who work less than 20 hours per week are not eligible to accrue leave.

With the supervisor's approval, an employee may use sick leave for absences due to the following reasons:

- Illness (including childbirth) or injury;
- Adoption;
- Exposure to contagious diseases which might endanger others; or
- Illness, injury, or death in employee's immediate family (spouse, children, parents, siblings, grandparents, in-law equivalents of the aforementioned and any relative residing in the employee's home). This provision also covers *in loco parentis* relationships.

Employees absent for unapproved reasons or absent after sick leave has been exhausted, will have their pay reduced based on **Board Policy**.

**Accrued sick leave balances** at the time of retirement from school may be purchased from employees according to current **Board policy** with the following stipulations:

- Employee must have been employed full time for a minimum of nine months;
- Employee must request payment for unused leave within one year or forfeit all monies due; and
- Employees of WIA may not transfer sick leave from another Georgia school system per Board policy

#### **Sick Leave Bank**

The Sick Leave Bank (SLB) was established to provide additional sick leave to SLB members who have catastrophic personal illness, non-elective surgery, elective surgery with complications, or injury with debilitating consequences beyond their control, and who have exhausted their sick leave, vacation, and compensatory leave. **The SLB is available to eligible employees who earn sick leave.** Only those enrolled in the SLB for at least 90 days may apply to withdraw time from the bank. Applications for withdrawal of days shall be sent to Benefits and Leave Manager for approval.

#### **Personal Leave**

Up to **three days** of accumulated sick leave may be used each year for personal reasons. Supervisory approval is required prior to the date of the planned absence. The employee is not required to disclose the specific purpose for the leave. Personal leave may not be taken on protected days, including state mandated testing dates. Teachers may not take personal leave on the day before or after a student holiday. Specific dates when personal leave is not permitted are published each year in the administrative bulletin. Personal leave may not be carried over from year to year; therefore, unused personal leave will be carried over as accumulated sick leave.

#### **Personal Disability Leave**

Except in emergency cases, a completed Leave Request Form, accompanied by a physician's statement, must be submitted to the Benefits and Leave Administration Office at least 30 days before the anticipated date of disability. Childbirth is classified as a disability.

If an employee wishes to discontinue work before the anticipated date of disability, the employee must notify, if possible, the Benefits and Leave Administrator, in writing, 30 days before the leave is to begin. The employee will not be eligible for sick leave or short-term disability benefits.

If an employee has been absent 10 consecutive working days and has not notified the Benefits and Leave Administration Manager by completing a Leave Request Form, along with a written attending physician's statement or FMLA form certifying the disability and anticipated return to work date, his/her position is subject to being declared vacant and may result in employment termination.

### ***Extended Leave of Absence***

Employees who have completed at least three full years of service with Wesley are eligible for an extended leave of absence. No extended leaves of absence may exceed more than one calendar year unless approved by the Principal. Extended leaves may be granted for educational leave, health, and child-care, military, and political leave. Employees are entitled to return to active employment, contingent upon a vacancy in the field in which they were employed at the time leave was granted.

### ***Military Duty Leave***

Employees will be paid for a maximum period of 18 working days, per Federal fiscal year, for ordered military duty as defined in Georgia Code §38-2-279, and while going to and returning from such duty.

### ***Religious Leave***

Leave for religious holidays may not exceed three days per fiscal year. The employee should make up the leave at a time mutually agreed upon by the employee and the supervisor.

### ***Professional Leave for Certified Personnel***

An employee may request leave to attend specific professional activities or to receive in-service training. Leave requests must be approved by the supervisor and submitted to the Principal or his designee for approval at least two weeks prior to the requested absence. Approval of the request does not commit the system to payment of any expenses.

### ***Returning From Leave***

An employee who is returning to work after leave must notify Human Resources in writing by March 15 of his/her intention to return for the following school year. The employee will be placed in a job comparable to the one held before the leave was taken, if a position is available. Employees, who have been on an extended leave without pay and did not participate in the annual benefits Open Enrollment process, will be contacted by Leave Administration about the process for making benefit election changes.

When returning from disability leave, the employee must submit to the supervisor a release to work statement from the physician stating that the employee is able to perform the essential functions of the job.

### ***Jury Duty, Subpoena, and Other Court Order***

All school employees shall be allowed a leave of absence without loss of pay when they attend a judicial proceeding in response to a subpoena, summons for jury duty, and other court orders that require their attendance. **Employees with jury duty shall not have the jury leave deducted from sick or personal leave, and no employee using jury duty leave shall be required to pay the cost of employing a substitute.** Employees may also retain juror compensation.

### ***Family and Medical Leave Act***

Wesley International is in full compliance with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993. The FMLA may grant qualified employees **60 working days of unpaid leave every twelve months**, which may be used for the following purposes:

- Birth of a child;
- Adoption of a child or the placement of a foster child;
- Care for a sick spouse, child, or parent;
- Employee's own serious health condition; or
- Military service.

To be eligible for FMLA, an employee must have been employed by the school for at least 12 months and must have worked at least 1,250 hours during the prior twelve-month period.

The School requires that any leave request based on a family member's health condition, the employee's own health condition, or military caregiver status, be supported by the appropriate FMLA form. Additionally, an approved health care provider's release to return to work will be required for all employees who were on leave due to their own health condition.

The employee must provide at least 30 days notice of the employee's intention to take leave when possible. The employee should make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment in a manner that will not overly disrupt the operations of the district. With limited exceptions, any eligible employee who takes leave under FMLA is entitled to be restored to his/her job or an equivalent position.

Detailed information concerning FMLA is available through Board Policies and Procedures, and the Benefits and Leave Administration Office.

### ***Staff Meetings (Policy)***

Regular staff meetings are a necessary part of the school operations. Each school shall have a schedule for staff meetings on a regular basis. The principal shall call special staff meetings for professional learning, accreditation, and/or workshops as deemed necessary. All staff members are required as part of their teaching/employment responsibilities to attend any or all such meetings as designated by the principal.

### ***Health and Safety***

The Board recognizes the responsibility for ensuring the safety of all employees. Therefore, it is the **policy of the Board** to take all practical steps to develop and implement a safety program for all employees, which will provide and maintain safe and healthful working conditions, adequate protection equipment and develop operating procedures and practices that comply with federal, state, and local legislation pertaining to accident prevention.

#### **To help ensure safe working conditions, an employee is responsible for:**

1. Knowing the potential hazards of the job.
2. Learning and following the safety practices required by management of the school.
3. Using health and safety devices required by the job
4. Correcting and/or reporting safety hazards immediately.
5. Immediately reporting any accident or injury to supervisor.
6. Obeying "No Smoking" regulations. All students are prohibited from tobacco use on campus or at school activities, functions, or events. While fulfilling their duties as school employees, staff members shall not use tobacco in the presence of students or on school property.
7. Operating machinery or equipment only if qualified to do so.
8. Maintaining good housekeeping practices including keeping all fire exits clear and firefighting equipment accessible.

### ***Drug Free Workplace (Procedure Policy)***

The Board provides a drug-free workplace and professes that the use of illicit drugs and the unlawful possession and use of tobacco and alcohol are wrong and harmful. The unlawful possession, use, manufacture, distribution, or dispensation of illicit drugs, tobacco, and alcohol by employees on school premises, in school vehicles, or at any school-sponsored activities is prohibited. Compliance with these standards is mandatory. Disciplinary sanctions up to and including termination of employment and referral for prosecution will be imposed on employees who violate these prohibitions.

Employees are prohibited from using or displaying drug, alcohol, and tobacco products in front of students while the employee is on duty, during the normal school day, or while on duty at any school-sponsored function.

### ***Use of Illicit Drugs***

For criminal drug statute convictions of employees for violations occurring in the workplace, the following steps must be followed:

1. Employees must notify WIA, in writing, of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace (in a WIA facility, vehicles, and at school-sponsored activities) no later than five calendar days after such conviction.
2. WIA will notify all appropriate federal agencies in writing within ten calendar days after receiving notice from an employee or otherwise receiving actual notice of such conviction.

WIA will take one of the following actions, within 30 calendar days of receiving notice with respect to any employee who is so convicted:

1. Take appropriate personnel action against such an employee, up to and including termination, consistent with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and/or
2. Require such employee to participate satisfactorily in drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a federal, state, or local health, law enforcement, or other appropriate agency.

An on-going drug-free awareness program is provided to inform employees about:

- . the dangers of drug abuse;
- . **WIA Drug-Free Workplace Policy** and the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act for Students and Employees;
- . the penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace; and
- . drug and alcohol counseling, rehabilitation, and re-entry programs.

### ***Smoking***

No employee, student, nor school visitor is permitted to use any tobacco product while in any building, facility, or vehicle owned or leased by WIA. This includes all school grounds and property, as well as athletic fields and parking lots. Tobacco use is prohibited at all school-sponsored events 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

### ***Drug and Alcohol Testing Procedure (Policy)***

In recognition of its responsibilities to take reasonable measures to ensure that the students it undertakes to transport are transported safely; and in further recognition that safe transportation depends on the driver/employee's physical dexterity, reflex action, unimpaired judgment, and unimpaired senses of sight and hearing; and in recognition of the fact that certain drug and/or alcohol use can impair an employee's ability to transport students safely; the Board of Education hereby implements a controlled substance and alcohol testing program for all employees engaged in safety-sensitive functions.

As part of the Board's continuing effort to provide an environment for students and employees that promotes health and safety, the Board will not tolerate the use, possession, or sale of any controlled substances, alcohol, or misuse of any legally prescribed or obtained medications by employees engaged in safety-sensitive functions. The Board will provide training, education, and other assistance to employees to help them understand their responsibilities in achieving an environment free of alcohol and controlled substances.

**Information concerning Drug and Alcohol Testing is outlined in our Procedure Policy.** Noncompliance with this policy or violation of the regulations may result in severe disciplinary action including suspension or dismissal.

## ***Complaint Procedures (Policy GA Association of Educators)***

### ***Purpose***

The purpose of this policy is to provide a way for the Board and its employees to reach solutions to problems, disputes, or controversies that may occur and to provide a mechanism for employees or applicants to complain about unlawful discrimination or harassment. It is the intent of this policy to provide in a clear and concise way for the solution of complaints at the lowest possible administrative level, as fairly, and as expeditiously as possible.

This policy may also be used specifically, as a procedure, by employees, who allege discrimination or harassment based on age, gender, race, color, religion, national origin, or disability. In the case of alleged discrimination based on age, gender, race, color, religion, national origin, or disability, employees may complain directly to the supervisor/HR manager, who will make a prompt investigation. Any supervisor/HR personnel who becomes aware of such a complaint should notify the Human Resources Committee of the Board of Education no later than on the business day immediately following his/her knowledge of the complaint.

Please refer to the Board of Education's Complaint Procedure **Complaint forms** may be obtained from a supervisor/HR manager.

### ***Scope of Complaint: Exclusions***

This complaint and grievance procedure is applicable to any claim by any employee of WIA 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 school is required to comply.

### **Exclusions - Unless the complaint is based on unlawful discrimination, this procedure shall not apply to:**

1. Performance ratings contained in personnel evaluation and professional development plans;
2. Job performance;
3. Termination, non-renewal, demotion, suspension, or reprimand of any employee; and/or
4. The revocation, suspension, or denial of certificates of any employee.

An employee, who chooses to appeal under Code §20-2-1160, shall be barred from pursuing the same complaint under this policy.

### ***Procedure: Initiating a Complaint and Requesting a Hearing***

In order to resolve matters in a fair, equitable, and expeditious manner, the Board of Education has developed a procedure outlined in **The Policy Handbook**. This policy is designed to identify all parties involved, provide timelines, and assist in organizing complaint information.

## ***Sexual Harassment Policy (Policy)***

The Board is committed to providing a workplace free from distractions caused by sexual harassment; all forms of discrimination based on race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin, or handicap; or inappropriate or offensive conduct. It is the Board's expectation that all personnel conduct themselves in a highly professional manner and respect coworkers, students, parents, and customers. In this regard, the Board prohibits sexual harassment, all forms of discrimination, and other unprofessional conduct.

It shall be the responsibility of the Board of Education or his/her designee to ensure that a procedure consistent with this policy and applicable law is implemented.

Sexual harassment includes repeated unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which:

1. Is made a term or condition of an individual's employment;
2. Is used as the basis for employment decisions such as promotions or benefits; and/or
3. Substantially interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

**Examples of sexual harassment and unprofessional conduct include:**

1. Making sexually oriented remarks such as jokes, inquiries, or innuendo;
2. Making inappropriate sex-based comments, gestures, or insults and sex-based stereotyping;
3. Making inappropriate comments or compliments about physical appearance or attire;
4. Making inappropriate sexual terms of endearment or demanding forms of address;
5. Offering employment or other benefits in exchange for sexual favors;
6. Making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances;
7. Asking a coworker repeatedly to spend time with you after being turned down;
8. Displaying offensive sexual material in the workplace;
9. Touching, pinching, grabbing, patting, kissing, or hugging unnecessarily or inappropriately;
10. Having inappropriate discussion of personal sexual activities; and/or
11. Sending inappropriate sexually explicit photos, poems, stories, jokes by electronic media or courier or any other internal means of communication.

***Filing a Complaint of Sexual Harassment (Procedure Policy)***

A person should report complaints of sexual harassment to his/her supervisor or any manager. If, for any reason, the person prefers not to share the complaint with the supervisor, or any manager, he/she may file a complaint or consult with the Human Resources Committee of the Board of Education.

***Personnel Records (Policy)***

It is the responsibility of employees to inform the Human Resources Manager of any change in home address and/or phone number so that the employee file may be updated accordingly.

Information contained in an employee's personnel file is kept strictly confidential except as may be required by law, requested by the employee, or requested by authorized school officials on a need-to-know basis. Otherwise, requests for information not specifically approved by the employee will be referred to the Human Resources Manager. There are specific document types that are protected from public disclosure, as stated in the Georgia Open Records Act. These documents include medical records, home address information, Social Security numbers, insurance information, and confidential evaluations.

WIA will release, with written approval, from the employee, information about the employee's current salary, dates of employment, job title, and work location.

An employee may review his/her personnel records by making an appointment with the appropriate Human Resources Manager at the school, as required. Confidential reference documents are not available for review.

Any employee records maintained by supervisory personnel shall also be kept confidential, with access limited only to authorized school officials on a need-to-know basis. The immediate supervisor of an active employee may retain the individual performance and evaluations records.

***Use of Electronic Resources (Policy)***

The Board recognizes that electronic media, including the web/internet, provides access to a wide variety of instructional resources in an effort to enhance educational opportunities. Use of electronic resources must be in support of, and consistent with the vision, mission, and goals established by the Board of Education and for the purpose of IB instructional support or administrative functions.



## **The Code of Ethics for Educators**

**Effective January 1, 2018**

### **505- 6 -.01 THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS**

#### **(1) Introduction.**

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

#### **(2) Definitions**

- (a) "Breach of contract" occurs when an educator fails to honor a signed contract for employment with a school/school system by resigning in a manner that does not meet the guidelines established by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.
- (b) "Certificate" refers to any teaching, service, or leadership certificate, license, or permit issued by authority of the Professional Standards Commission.
- (c) "Child endangerment" occurs when an educator disregards a substantial and/or unjustifiable risk of bodily harm to the student.
- (d) "Educator" is a teacher, school or school system administrator, or other education personnel who holds a certificate issued by the Professional Standards Commission and persons who have applied for but have not yet received a certificate. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, "educator" also refers to paraprofessionals, aides, and substitute teachers.
- (e) "Student" is any individual enrolled in the state's public or private schools from preschool through grade 12 or any individual under the age of 18. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, the enrollment period for a graduating student ends on August 31 of the year of graduation.
- (f) "Complaint" is any written and signed statement from a local board, the state board, or one or more individual residents of this state filed with the Professional Standards Commission alleging that an educator has breached one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators. A "complaint" will be deemed a request to investigate.
- (g) "Revocation" is the invalidation of any certificate held by the educator.
- (h) "Denial" is the refusal to grant initial certification to an applicant for a certificate.
- (i) "Suspension" is the temporary invalidation of any certificate for a period of time specified by the Professional Standards Commission.
- (j) "Reprimand" admonishes the certificate holder for his or her conduct. The reprimand cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.
- (k) "Warning" warns the certificate holder that his or her conduct is unethical. The warning cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.
- (l) "Monitoring" is the quarterly appraisal of the educator's conduct by the Professional Standards Commission through contact with the educator and his or her employer. As a condition of monitoring, an educator may be required to submit a criminal background check (GCIC). The Commission specifies the length of the monitoring period.
- (m) "No Probable Cause" is a determination by the Professional Standards Commission that, after a preliminary investigation, either no further action need be taken or no cause exists to recommend disciplinary action.

#### **(3) Standards**

##### **(a) Standard 1: Legal Compliance**

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

**(b) Standard 2: Conduct with Students**

An educator shall always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

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

**(c) Standard 3: Alcohol or Drugs**

An educator shall refrain from the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs during the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

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

**(d) Standard 4: Honesty**

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

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

**(e) Standard 5: Public Funds and Property**

An educator entrusted with public funds and property shall honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

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

**(f) Standard 6: Remunerative Conduct**

An educator shall maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

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

**(g) Standard 7: Confidential Information**

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

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

**(h) Standard 8: Required Reports**

An educator shall file reports of a breach of one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators, child abuse (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5), or any other required report. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. failure to report all requested information on documents required by the Commission when applying for or renewing any certificate with the Commission;
2. failure to make a required report of a violation of one or more standards of the Code of Ethics for educators of which they have personal knowledge as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner; and
3. failure to make a required report of any violation of state or federal law soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. These reports include but are not limited to: murder, voluntary manslaughter, aggravated assault, aggravated battery, kidnapping, any sexual offense, any sexual exploitation of a minor, any offense involving a controlled substance and any abuse of a child if an educator has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused.

**(i) Standard 9: Professional Conduct**

An educator shall demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and preserves the dignity and integrity of the education profession. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to a resignation that would equate to a breach of contract; any conduct that impairs and/or diminishes the certificate holder's ability to function professionally in his or her employment position; or behavior or conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students.

**(j) Standard 10: Testing -**

An educator shall administer state-mandated assessments fairly and ethically. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. committing any act that breaches Test Security; and
2. compromising the integrity of the assessment.

**(4) Reporting**

(a) Educators are required to report a breach of one or more of the Standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. Educators should be aware of legal requirements and local policies and procedures for reporting unethical conduct. Complaints filed with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission must be in writing and must be signed by the complainant (parent, educator, or other LUA/school district employee, etc.).

(b) The Commission notifies local and state officials of all disciplinary actions. In addition, suspensions and revocations are reported to national officials, including the NASDTEC Clearinghouse.

**(5) Disciplinary Action**

(a) The Georgia Professional Standards Commission is authorized to suspend, revoke, or deny certificates, to issue a reprimand or warning, or to monitor the educator's conduct and performance after an investigation is held and notice and opportunity for a hearing are provided to the certificate holder.

Any of the following grounds shall be considered cause for disciplinary action against the holder of a certificate:

1. unethical conduct as outlined in The Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-11 -10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);
  2. disciplinary action against a certificate in another state on grounds consistent with those specified in the Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-11 -10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);
  3. order from a court of competent jurisdiction or a request from the Department of Human Resources that the certificate should be suspended or the application for certification should be denied for non-payment of child support (O.C.G.A. §19-6-28.1 and §19-11-9.3);
  4. notification from the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation that the educator is in default and not in satisfactory repayment status on a student loan guaranteed by the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation (O.C.G.A. 20-3-295);
  5. suspension or revocation of any professional license or certificate
  6. violation of any other laws and rules applicable to the profession (O.C.G.A. §16-13-111); and
  7. any other good and sufficient cause that renders an educator unfit for employment as an educator.
- (b) An individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended may not serve as a volunteer or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher or, in any other position during the period of his or her revocation, suspension or denial for a violation of The Code of Ethics. The superintendent and the educator designated by the superintendent/Local Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that an individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district. Both the superintendent and the superintendent's designee must hold GaPSC certification. Should the superintendent's certificate be revoked, suspended, or denied, the Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that the superintendent whose certificate has been revoked, suspended, or denied is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district.

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