



POLICY MANUAL

*Dothan City Board of Education Policy
Manual*

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Preface

The Dothan City Board of Education is established under authority of state law for the purpose of exercising general supervision and administration of the public schools serving school age children who reside within the city limits of the City of Dothan, and of promoting the interests of the Dothan City Schools and the children they serve. Those responsibilities are met, in part, by the adoption and implementation of formal policies.

Policies are generally broad statements of principle and purpose, and are intended to serve as a framework for decision making and administrative action. Policies may establish specific substantive standards and requirements, including standards of personal and professional conduct, the violation of which may result in disciplinary sanctions or other adverse consequences. However, policies do not restrict the ability of the Board or its employees to respond reasonably and flexibly to unexpected contingencies, emergencies, and other conditions that call for a response that is tailored to unique or special circumstances.

Policies should be construed as a whole and with reference to related policies and applicable law. Although policies are adopted partly for the purpose of meeting the requirements of pertinent law, they do not establish or create a legal right, claim, entitlement, or interest to or in any title, position, assignment, duty, work location, level or rate of compensation, benefit, or term of employment.

Any provision, feature, or aspect of Board policy that does not conform to governing law should be deemed void and superseded by such law. Editorial changes that do not affect the meaning, substance, or application of a policy may be made by the Board without advance public notice and comment. In general, the Board reserves the right to adopt, revise, interpret, amend, repeal, suspend, or apply policies according to its assessment of the needs and interests of the school system, subject only to such limitations on the exercise of such prerogatives as may be imposed by law.

Definitions

Except as otherwise expressly provided in individual policies or required by the context, the following terms have the meanings given below:

- a. “Board” or “Board of Education” means and refers to the Dothan City Board of Education.
- b. “State” means and refers to the State of Alabama.
- c. “System” or “school system” means and refers to all schools, facilities, and operations of the Dothan City Board of Education.
- d. “State Board of Education” means and refers to the Board that exercises general control and supervision over the public schools of the State of Alabama as constituted and authorized by ALA. CODE § 16-3-1, *et seq.* (1975).

- e. “Alabama (State) Department of Education” means and refers to the state agency that is charged with implementing the policies, procedures, and regulations of the State Board of Education as provided in ALA. CODE § 16-2-1, *et seq.* (1975).
- f. “He,” “his,” or “him” means and includes all genders.
- g. “Law” includes local, state, and federal statutes, regulations, ordinances, court decisions, and binding administrative orders or directives.
- h. “Certified” or “certificated,” when used to modify the words “teacher,” “personnel,” “employee,” “staff,” or similar terms, means and refers to Board employees who hold certificated or comparable forms of licensure issued by the State Superintendent of Education under authority of ALA. CODE §16-23-1 (1975).
- i. “Classified” or “support,” when used to modify the words “personnel,” “employee,” “staff,” or similar terms, means and refers to Board employees who do not hold certificates issued by the State Superintendent of Education under authority of ALA. CODE §16-23-1 (1975) and who, in general, hold employment positions of the type identified in ALA. CODE §16-24C-3(2) (1975), of the Code of Alabama (1975).

Citations to the United States Code, the Code of Alabama, and the Alabama Administrative Code are all intended to refer the reader to sources that either serve as legal authority for the policy provisions or that provide additional or more detailed information regarding the subject matter of the policy. The citations are not exhaustive and are subject to repeal, amendment, or invalidation by court rulings. Such changes may not be reflected in the policy.

I. Governing Principles

1.1 *Mission Statement*

Dothan City Schools mission is to prepare all students for the choices and challenges of the 21st Century (the future). Our goal is to prepare all students to participate productively and responsibly in a rapidly changing society.

1.2 *Beliefs*

- a. All decisions will be made with the best interest of students first.
- b. All students will be successful learners.
- c. All students will be taught to respect themselves and others.
- d. All students will be taught communicate effectively.
- e. All students will meet and exceed high standards.

II. School Board Operations

2.1 *Board Composition and Organization*

2.1.1 Composition – The Dothan City Board of Education is composed of seven (7) members who are elected by the qualified electors of the City of Dothan, with one member being elected from each of the six school districts and the chair being elected from the city at-large. Members of Dothan City Board of Education must be at least 21 years of age, residents of the school board district which they seek to represent for at least 90 consecutive days immediately preceding the deadline date for qualifying as a candidate and shall not have a record of conviction for any crime involving moral turpitude. The Chair shall have the same qualifications except they shall have been a resident of the city for 90 days instead of the district.

2.1.2 Terms of Office – School board members shall serve for four-year terms. Board members shall serve from the date on which they are sworn into office until the swearing in of their successors following the next regularly scheduled school board elections.

2.1.3 Unexpired Term Fulfillment – In the event a vacancy occurs on the Dothan City Board of Education, the vacancy shall be filled by appointment by a majority of the remaining members of the City Board of Education for the unexpired term. In the event the vacancy is not filled by the remaining members of the City Board within thirty (30) days, the State Superintendent of Education shall fill the vacancy by appointment. The City Superintendent shall notify the State Superintendent of Education when a vacancy on the City Board of Education has not been filled within thirty (30) days.

2.1.4 Officers – The Board will elect from its members a vice-chairman at the annual meeting of the Board held in May of each year. The Superintendent will serve as both the Board’s chief executive officer and secretary. If the Superintendent’s position is vacant, the Board may appoint one of its members to act as secretary until such time as the Superintendent’s position is filled.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §§16-11-5, 16-12-3 (1975)]

2.1.5 Committees – The Board may divide itself into standing or special committees for the purpose of more efficiently conducting Board business, but no recommendation or action of any committee will bind the Board without the affirmative vote of a majority of the whole Board.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §§16-11-5, 9 (1975)]

2.2 *Duties and Authority of Board Members*

The Board has the authority and responsibility to administer and supervise the public schools that are located within the City of Dothan, Alabama. Board authority will only be exercised collectively through action taken in accordance with applicable statutory and parliamentary procedures. Individual Board members have no authority to bind the Board or to act on behalf of the Board except when authorized to do so by official action of the Board.

2.3 *Board Member Compensation*

Board members may be compensated for their services and reimbursed for expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties as authorized by law.

2.4 *Board Member Training*

Board members will participate in orientation and ongoing training provided by the Alabama Association of School Boards or approved in advance through an application process administered by AASB to develop and enhance their knowledge and effectiveness as Board members and to improve Board governance and operations in accordance with the requirements of state law.

[Reference: Ala. Code §16-1-41 (1975)]

2.5 *Board Meetings*

2.5.1 General Provisions – The Board will hold regular and specially called meetings in accordance with applicable statutory requirements and as dictated by the needs of the school system. All meetings of the Board will be open to the public except as may otherwise be required or permitted by law.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §36-25A-1, *et seq.* (1975)]

2.5.2 Time and Place – The times and places for regularly scheduled meetings will be established by the Board at the annual meeting held in May of each year, provided that the Board may modify its meeting schedule in the exercise of its sound discretion. Public notice of the dates, times, and places of meetings of the Board will be given in the manner prescribed by law. Board members will be given such advance notice of specially called meetings as is practicable under the circumstances.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §§16-11-5, 36-25A-1, *et seq.* (1975)].

2.5.3 Special (Called) Meetings – Special meetings shall be called by the Chairman of the Board, by the Superintendent, or upon the written request (which may be conveyed

by electronic mail) of a majority of the members of the Board to the Chairman. Notice of the call or request shall be simultaneously conveyed to all

board members and to the Superintendent, together with a statement of the reason for the call or request and the matters to be addressed at the meeting. The meeting shall be set as soon as is practicable, taking into account the reasonable availability of board members and the Superintendent, the urgency of the matters to be addressed, and the necessity to provide public notice of the meeting as provided by law.

- 2.5.4 Rules of Order – Board meetings will be conducted in accordance with the most recently revised edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order*, provided that strict adherence to the formalities of the Rules of Order may be reasonably relaxed in order to facilitate conduct of Board businesses. A majority of the whole Board will constitute a quorum for purposes of transacting Board business except as may otherwise be provided by law. Deviations from or errors in executing parliamentary procedure do not invalidate Board actions or decisions that are otherwise consistent with the intent of the Board.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-11-5 (1975)]

- 2.5.5 Public Participation – In order to permit orderly scheduling of public remarks and the inclusion of such in the agenda, anyone wishing to speak before the Board, either as an individual, or as a member of a group, should inform the Superintendent in writing of the desire to do so and of the topic to be discussed as early as possible, but in no event less than two weeks prior to the meeting.

Any individual desiring to speak shall stand and give his or her name and the group name, if any, that he or she represents. The presentation should be as brief as possible, and in no event shall such address exceed the time provided to the speaker by the Board Chairman. Speakers may make statements about their particular concern with school operations and programs and shall observe appropriate decorum in doing so. The Board will not hear comments regarding individual students, personal complaints against particular school personnel or any person connected with the school system in public session.

At his or her discretion, the Board Chairman may allow public comments from the floor at the end of the regular meeting agenda, subject to the limitations above. The Board Chairman may terminate any comments that do not conform to the criteria specified above, or for other good cause.

2.6 *Superintendent’s Responsibilities, Qualifications, and Appointment*

- 2.6.1 Role, Responsibilities, Qualifications, and Term – The Superintendent serves as the chief executive officer of and secretary to the Board. The Superintendent may

exercise such prerogatives and duties as are prescribed by statute, as are delegated or specified in an employment contract, or as are otherwise lawfully assigned by the Board. The Superintendent must possess the minimum qualifications for the position that are established by law and such other qualifications as may be specified by the Board. The term of the Superintendent's appointment will be established by contract and may be renewed, extended, modified, subject to any limitations regarding the extension or renewal of the appointment as are imposed by law.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-12-3 (1975)]

2.6.2 Scope of Executive and Administrative Authority – In addition to specific grants of authority set forth in particular Board policies, the Superintendent is authorized

to develop and implement such lawful and reasonable rules, regulations, operating procedures, administrative directives, or like measures as are directed to compliance with legal requirements or attainment of the objects of Board policy.

2.7 *Team Governance Operating Procedures*

The Dothan City School Board and Superintendent will work together to become a strong, purposeful, governance team. By always keeping student issues first place, we strive to be thought of by parents, students, community and staff in the following way:

- Effective Leadership team
- Shared beliefs about what is possible for all students
- Accountable
- Informed
- Professional
- Good Stewards
- Ambassadors for the Dothan City School System
- Ethical

To meet the goal of being a high functioning Board/Superintendent Team, we agree to the following norms on how we work with each other, the public and the staff.

- a. Board Members understand that individual board members do not have the authority to act unilaterally. Only the Board as a whole has authority.
- b. The Board Chair will communicate the position of the Board on controversial issues.
- c. Following collective decision-making, the Board Members and the Superintendent will be supportive of the final decision.

- d. The Board recognizes that the Superintendent is a key member of the Governance Team.
- e. The Board supports the Superintendent in his/her role as the Chief Executive Officer; charged with handling operational issues and implementing the Board policies.
- f. The Board is responsible for evaluating the Superintendent on agreed goals in a timely manner.
- g. The Board recognizes the chain of command and agrees that the Board Members are the last stop, not the first in solving issues.
- h. The Board will refer concerns related to operational issues to the Superintendent.
- i. The Board will refer questions of the staff to the Superintendent for dissemination and response.
- j. The Board recognizes that personnel is a direct role of the Superintendent. Any personnel complaints will be provided to the Superintendent to resolve.
- k. The Superintendent will communicate information to all Board Members.
- l. The Superintendent will share information with all Board Members.
- m. The Board and the Superintendent will act as role models and always treat each other with dignity and respect.

2.8 *Recordkeeping and Retention of Board Records*

Board records will be maintained by the Superintendent in the manner and for the length of time required by law. Otherwise, records will be retained and disposed of in accordance with procedures that will include a records retention and destruction schedule to be prepared and promulgated by the Superintendent and approved by the Board.

2.9 *Association Membership*

The Board will maintain membership in the Alabama Association of School Boards.

III. Fiscal Management

3.1 *Chief School Financial Officer*

The Board will appoint a Chief School Financial Officer to oversee the financial operations of the Board and to perform the duties of the position that are set forth in state law and regulations. The Chief School Financial Officer may also be referred to as the Chief School Finance Officer.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-13A-4 (1975); Ala. Admin. Code 290-2-5-.01, *et seq.*]

3.2 *Budget*

A budget will be developed and approved for each fiscal year, which extends from October 1st to September 30th of the following year. Preparation, presentation, submission, and approval of the budget will be undertaken and completed as provided for in state law and regulations, including providing an opportunity for public input regarding the budget. Budgets will be “balanced” such that the expenditures set forth in the budget for the fiscal year will not exceed revenues and any fund balances on hand.

The Superintendent or Chief School Financial Officer will inform the Board, before the Board votes on a budget or budget amendment that will prevent the establishment or maintenance of a one-month’s operating balance. A one-month’s operating balance shall be determined by dividing the General Fund expenditures and fund transfers out by 12. In determining the General Fund expenditures and fund transfers out, the proposed budget or budget amendment shall be used.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-13-140, *et seq.* (1975)]

3.3 *Accounting*

Generally accepted accounting standards and procedures will be employed in the administration of all Board and school finances. All Board and school accounts will be reconciled to financial records. All reports required by the State Department of Education will be completed in a timely manner with copies provided to Board members.

3.4 *Finance Manual Authorized*

Financial transactions will be administered in accordance with a general finance manual and any local school finance manual that may be developed by the Superintendent and/or the Chief School Financial Officer and approved by the Board. The finance manual(s) will establish and describe specific practices and procedures that are to be followed in connection with all phases of financial administration, including, but not limited to such matters as accounting, bookkeeping, inventory maintenance, payroll, reconciliation, fund security, receipting, disbursement, purchasing, disposal of property, banking, and investments. The practices, procedures, and requirements set forth in the manual(s) will be disseminated or made available to all employees with administrative responsibilities

involving the receipt, handling, or expenditure of school or school system funds, and training will be provided by the Superintendent and/or the Chief School Financial Officer regarding the contents of the manual(s).

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-13A-1 (1975)]

3.5 *Fund Balance Policy in Accordance with GASB Statement No. 54*

3.5.1 Governmental Funds Definitions – The following definitions will be used in reporting activity in governmental funds. The Board may or may not report all fund types in any given reporting period, based on actual circumstances and activity.

- a. The General Fund is used to account for and report all financial resources not accounted for and reported in another fund.
- b. Special Revenue Funds are used to account for and report the proceeds of specific revenue sources that are restricted or committed to expenditure for specified purposes other than debt service or capital projects.
- c. Debt Service Funds are used to account for and report financial resources that are restricted, committed, or assigned to expenditure for principal and interest, even if it is being accumulated for future years' payments. Debt Service Funds should be used to report resources if legally mandated.
- d. Capital Projects Funds are used to account for and report financial resources that are restricted, committed, or assigned to expenditure for capital outlays, including the acquisition or construction of capital facilities and other capital assets.

3.5.2 Fund Balances – Fund balances will be reported in governmental funds under the following five categories using the definitions provided by GASB Statement No. 54:

- a. Nonspendable fund balances include amounts that cannot be spent because they are either (a) not in spendable form or (b) legally or contractually required to be maintained in-tact. Examples of nonspendable fund balance reserves for which fund balance shall not be available for financing general operating expenditures include: inventories, prepaid items, and long-term receivables.
- b. Restricted fund balances consist of amounts that are subject to externally enforceable legal restrictions imposed by creditors, grantors, contributors, or laws and regulations of other governments; or through constitutional provisions or enabling legislation. Examples of restricted fund balances include: restricted grants.

- c. Committed fund balances consist of amounts that are subject to a purpose constraint imposed by formal action of the Board before the end of the fiscal year and that require the same level of formal action to remove the constraint.
- d. Assigned fund balances consist of amounts that are intended to be used by the school system for specific purposes. The Board authorizes the Superintendent or Chief School Finance Officer to make a determination of the assigned amounts of fund balance. Such assignments may not exceed the available (spendable, unrestricted, uncommitted) fund balance in any particular fund. Assigned fund balances require the same level of authority to remove the constraint.
- e. Unassigned fund balances include all spendable amounts not contained in the other classifications. This portion of the total fund balance in the general fund is available to finance operating expenditures.

3.5.3 Priority – When expenditure is incurred for purposes for which both restricted and unrestricted (committed, assigned, or unassigned) amounts are available, it shall be the policy of the Board to consider restricted amounts to have been reduced first. When an expenditure is incurred for the purposes for which amounts in any of the unrestricted fund balance classifications could be used, it shall be the policy of the Board that committed amounts would be reduced first, followed by assigned amounts and then unassigned amounts.

3.5.4 Review and Reporting – The Board of Education along with the Superintendent and Chief School Finance Officer will periodically review all restricted, committed, and assigned fund balances. The Chief School Finance Officer will prepare and submit an annual report of all restricted, committed and assigned funds for the Board of Education.

3.6 *Audits*

Business and financial transactions of the Board and the records of Board financial accounts will be audited in accordance with state law and appropriate auditing and accounting standards.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-13A-7 (1975)]

3.7 *Inventories*

The Superintendent is required to establish effective procedures to account for all materials, equipment, and other Board property. These procedures will include an annual inventory and evaluation of tangible Board property (including fixed assets and supplemental property), to be completed by a designated staff member no later than the end of each fiscal

year, with appropriate reports submitted to the Superintendent and Chief School Financial Officer. Inventories will be kept on forms prescribed or approved by the Chief School Financial Officer. Inventory forms will show items on hand at the beginning of the fiscal year, items lost, items disposed of, items purchased or otherwise added during the year, and items on hand at the end of the fiscal year.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §§16-13A-1, 6 (1975)]

3.8 *Purchasing*

Purchases will be made in accordance with an approved purchase order system that will include such requirements and procedures as may be established in the Board Finance Manual.

3.9 *Deposit and Expenditure of Funds*

3.9.1 Deposits – All funds of the Board will be deposited with qualified depositories, as defined by law, in the manner prescribed by the Chief School Financial Officer or the Finance Manual.

3.9.2 Investments – The Board authorizes the investment of surplus funds in the manner prescribed by law and approved administrative guidelines.

3.9.3 Expenditures – The Superintendent or their designee may spend funds budgeted for operations in an amount not to exceed \$25,000 per transaction without prior Board approval unless the expenditure involves a capital outlay or is subject to the bid law. The Superintendent’s expenditure authority shall include, but not be limited to, the prerogative to enter into contracts and to engage professional consultants, specialists and experts, including but not limited to medical, mental health, educational, legal, financial, technical (e.g., engineering, architectural, computer) experts and specialists subject to the \$25,000 per transaction limit.

The term “transaction” and the limit specified above applies to the transaction as a whole and not to portions, segments, or phases of a project or undertaking. All expenditures made pursuant to this policy be reported monthly to the Board of Education in the manner prescribed by §16-13A-8 of the Code of Alabama (1975).

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-13A-8 (1975)]

3.9.4 Competitive Bid Law – All purchases will be made in compliance with the competitive bid law, when applicable, and with such corresponding rules, regulations, and procedures as may be set forth in the Board’s Finance Manual. The Superintendent is authorized to enter into cooperative purchasing agreements with other school systems or local governments as may be permitted by law.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §41-16-50, *et seq.* (1975)]

3.9.5 Authorized Signatures – Checks drawn on the general fund or any special fund, with the exception of school accounts, require the signature of the Superintendent and the Chief School Financial Officer or their alternates as designated by the

Board. Checks drawn on school accounts require the signature of the principal or the chief school financial officer. All checks used will be prenumbered. Checks drawn on Board funds may be signed and processed by electronic means, under the direction of the Chief School Financial Officer or Superintendent.

3.10 Federal Funds

Federal funds subject to the requirements of the Office of Management and Budget’s Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements—Part 200 (“Part 200”) will be subject to the following policies:

3.10.1 Cash Management – The Board will minimize the time between the receipt of federal funds from the United States Treasury, the Alabama Department of Education, or other pass-through entity, and the disbursement of the federal funds. Federal funds will only be requested to meet immediate cash needs as follows:

- Reimbursement not covered by prior receipts and;
- Anticipated disbursements that are generally fixed, such as monthly program salaries and benefits; or,
- Disbursements will be made within in fifteen business days after receipt of funds.
- The Chief School Financial Officer will maintain financial records that account for the receipt, obligation, and expenditure of each federal program fund.
- Cash balances for each federal program fund and for the aggregate of all federal program funds will be monitored regularly by the Chief School Financial Officer or designee.

The Board will ensure that the cash balances in federal program funds are kept at a level so that federal program funds earn less than \$500 in interest in a fiscal year if maintained in interest-bearing accounts. The federal program funds, with the exception of Child Nutrition Program funds, will not be maintained in an interest bearing bank account if the Chief School Financial Officer determines that banking requirements for minimum or average balances are so high that an interest-bearing account would not be feasible. Federal program funds will be maintained in insured checking accounts that are subject to the state requirements for public deposits under the SAFE program.

3.10.2 Determination of Allowable Costs – Before instituting a financial transaction that will require the expenditure of federal funds the federal program director and the chief financial officer or designee will determine that the proposed transaction meets the requirements for allowable costs for the federal program. Actions to determine allowable costs will assure that:

- The proposed expenditure is included in the federal program budget;
- The proposed expenditure is reasonable and necessary for the federal program;
- The proposed expenditure is consistent with procedures for financial transactions of the board including:
 - o Purchase order approval procedures;
 - o Contract review and approval procedures;
 - o Applicable competitive purchasing procedures and;
 - o Documentation supports that the transaction is allowable.

Before payments are made from federal funds the federal program director and the chief financial officer or designee will determine that the federal program expenditure complies with generally accepted accounting principles and complies with state, local, and federal laws, rules, and regulations.

3.10.3 Travel - Travel costs are the expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence, and related items incurred by board employees who are in an approved travel status on official business of the board. The board's travel policy provides for reimbursement and payments for travel costs of employees paid from federal funds that are consistent with the travel costs for board employees paid for state or local funds.

3.10.4 Conflict of Interest - Generally, a conflict of interest exists when a board member, board employee, or agent of the board participates in a matter that is likely to have a direct effect on his or her personal and financial interests. A financial interest may include, but is not limited to, stock ownership, partnership, trustee relationship, employment, potential employment, or a business relationship with an applicant, vendor, or entity. A board member, board employee, or agent of the board may not participate in his or her official capacity in a matter that is likely to have direct and predictable effects on his or her financial interests.

A board member, board employee, or agent of the board will abide by the Federal and state laws and regulations that address conflict of interest standards. In general, the Federal rules provide that:

No employee, officer, or agent of the board shall participate in selection, or in the award or administration of a contract supported by Federal funds if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest. Such a conflict would arise when the employee, officer, or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs, or is about to employ any of the parties

indicated herein, has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from the firm considered for a contract. The board's officers, employees, or agents will neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors or anything of monetary value from contractors, potential contractors, or parties to subcontracts.

The board's conflict of interest policies include adherence to the Alabama Ethics Law, which defines conflict of interest as:

A conflict, on the part of a public official or public employee, between his or her private interests and his or her official responsibilities that is inherent in an office of public trust. A conflict of interest involves any action, inaction, or decision by a public official or public employee in the discharge of his or her official duties which would materially affect his or her financial interest or those of his or her family members or any business with which the person is associated in a manner different from the manner it affects the other members of the class to which he or she belongs.

A board member, board employee, or agent of the board may not review applications, proposals, or participate in the evaluation or selection process where his or her participation in the review process would create the appearance that he or she is: (a) giving preferential treatment; (b) losing independence and impartiality; (c) making decisions outside official and appropriate channels; or (d) harming the public's confidence in the integrity of the board.

Situations and circumstances presenting an actual conflict or the appearance of a conflict should be brought to the immediate attention of superintendent. A board employee, board member, or agent of the board who has knowledge of a possible conflict of interest should identify the conflict and notify the superintendent. The superintendent will document his or her actions related to the reported conflict of interest. Resolution can consist of disqualification, recusal, waiver, or other appropriate measures. Appropriate measures may include reporting a conflict of interest to the State Ethics Commission, the Alabama State Board of Education, or the appropriate federal agency.

3.10.5 Procurement - The board will follow state laws for the procurement of property and services. The primary state procurement laws for Alabama school boards are:

- *Alabama Competitive Bid Laws (Chapter 138 of Title 16, Code of Alabama 1975);*
- *Joint Information Technology Purchasing Agreement (Chapter 138 of Title 16, Code of Alabama 1975); and,*
- *Public Works Law (Title 39, Code of Alabama 1975).*

To the extent allowed by state laws, the board will utilize state, local, regional, and national purchasing agreements where appropriate for the procurement or use of

goods and services. ALL procurement transactions are subject to the board's *Conflict of Interest Policy* and the procurement decisions of the board will:

- Avoid acquisition of unnecessary or duplicative goods and services;
- Use the most economical and efficient approach for acquisitions;
- Award acquisition contracts only to responsible contractors possessing the ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of the proposed procurement;
- Consider contractor integrity, compliance with public policy, record of past performance, and financial and technical resources prior to awarding procurement contracts;
- Maintain records sufficient to document the history of the procurement; and,
- Conduct procurement transactions in a manner that provides full and open competition.

Procurement transactions that are not subject to the state procurement laws, but exceed the aggregate amount of federal micro-purchase threshold, will be obtained by utilizing price or rate quotes from two or more qualified sources. State procurement laws include requirements that comply with the Uniform Administrative Requirements for procurement of property and services.

The board will request proposals for professional service contracts (excluding architectural and engineering services) that are not subject to the state procurement laws. The board will utilize a team of three or more qualified individuals to conduct a technical evaluation of proposals received and for selecting recipients. As a part of the evaluation, the individuals on the evaluation team will sign an assurance that each of the individuals is in compliance with the board's conflict of interest policy.

3.11 *Employee Compensation*

3.11.1 Salaries and Pay Rates –Board employees will be compensated at rates of pay that are approved by the Board. When required, such salary or compensation rates will be included in a schedule to be developed and adopted by the Board in accordance with state law. Employees may receive supplements or other additional compensation when specifically approved by the Board. All compensation must be recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Board, regardless of the source of funding.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-13-231.1 (1975)]

3.11.2 Local Supplements – School-related booster or support organizations may fund local supplements for individual Board employees if the Board approves such

supplemental payments. Such payments may be approved only if the following conditions are satisfied:

- a. The payment is voted on and approved by the membership of the booster or support organization that proposes to fund the supplement at a regular meeting of the organization;
- b. Funding for the payment must be sufficient to cover benefits, expenses, and other payroll costs, contributions, and liabilities, if any;
- c. Sufficient unobligated funds are on hand to provide the supplemental payment;
- d. A check and letter of authorization for the payment is sent to the Board no later than the payroll cutoff date for the month in which the payment is to be made;
- e. The payments are accepted by the employee with the understanding that they do not constitute a part of any employment contract, salary schedule, or legal obligation that is enforceable against the Board, and that the Board has no continuing obligation to maintain supplemental payments to any employee that are provided, funded, or underwritten by a booster club, support organization, or similar third party; and
- f. The payments are subject to any payroll deductions that are required by law.

3.11.3 Salary Administration – Employees are expected to fulfill the work requirements of the position held for the full term of their appointment. Compensation will be prorated to reflect the number of days actually worked, subject to appropriate adjustments, credits, and allowances for available leave. Salaries for full time employees will be paid over twelve months, regardless of the contract term. However, employees in the first year of employment with the Board may opt to be paid over thirteen (13) months. Personnel will be paid in accordance with customary payroll procedures, which may be modified from time to time as the needs of the system require. No employee is entitled to compensation except for work performed by the employee in accordance with an approved contract or the applicable terms of appointment. Compensation may be withheld pending the employee's timely, accurate, and complete submission of all required records, data, and reports.

3.11.4 Salary Deductions – Mandatory salary deductions will be made in accordance with applicable law, and employees are required to complete and submit all forms and provide such information as may be required or reasonably required for such purpose. The Board will make voluntary deductions as a service to employees upon written request of the individual employee to the extent permitted by law.

Deductions for membership dues will be made for organizations with at least 20 active members, as established by membership lists provided to the Board by the organization, if such deductions are allowed under state law and the organization has timely provided to the Board all certifications and expenditure reports required by law. Such membership lists will be corrected, updated, and returned to the Board by the Board no later than November 10 of each school year. Deductions will be based on the membership lists unless an employee revokes authorization for such deductions by providing written notice to the Board on or before September 15th of each school year.

Upon termination of employment, any amounts owed under the terms of an employee authorization will be deducted from the employee's final pay. The Board will not be liable for any good faith error made in implementing a salary deduction that has been authorized by the employee.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-22-6 (1975)]

- 3.11.5 Minimum Wage and Overtime – In compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (“FLSA”), the Board will pay required minimum hourly wages and overtime to all employees who are not exempt employees under the FLSA. For purposes of determining overtime, the workweek begins at 12:01 a.m. on Saturday and ends at midnight on the succeeding Friday. All non-exempt employees who work more than forty (40) hours in a work week will be given compensatory time in lieu of payment or paid overtime. Employees must accurately report all time worked for the Board. Non-exempt employees are not authorized to work more than forty (40) hours in a workweek without specific direction or authorization to do so by the Superintendent, the employee's supervisor, or the supervising school principal.
- 3.11.6 Compensatory Time – Non-exempt employees who work more than forty (40) hours in a workweek may, upon agreement between the employee and the Board, be paid overtime in the form of compensatory time. Compensatory time will be based on time worked beyond forty (40) hours in a workweek, and will be recorded in minimum time units of one-quarter hour rounded to the nearest quarter of an hour. No more than forty (40) hours of compensatory time may be accumulated. The Board reserves the right to require an employee to use compensatory time as its needs require and may “pay down” any compensatory time balance in its discretion. The Superintendent is hereby authorized to develop procedures and forms for use in implementing this policy.
- 3.11.7 Reporting Federal Time and Effort Policy-Time and effort reporting shall reasonably reflect the percentage distribution of effort expended by Dothan City Schools employees involved in federally funded programs, grants and/or contracts, and shall be incorporated into the records for the school district. These records shall reasonably reflect the activity for which the employee is compensated and shall encompass all activities on an integrated basis.

Employees who are compensated in whole or in part from a federally funded program (Title I, II-A, III, IDEA, etc.) and operate under a single cost objective are required to complete at least semi-annual certifications. Employees who are compensated in whole or in part from federal funds and operate under multiple cost objectives are required to complete a time and effort Personnel Activity Report for each month.

Dothan City Schools uses an “after-the-fact effort” reporting system. This indicates that the distribution of salaries will be supported by PARs and Semi-Annual Certification reports signed by the staff member and the direct supervisor after the completion of the report period.

The Director of the specific Federal Programs funds as well as the Chief School Financial Officer is responsible for the identification of, distribution, collection, and retention of all employee time and effort reports relative to federal funding.

The Time and Effort report must represent, in percentages totaling the agreed upon contractual amounts, the total activity for which each employee is compensated.

Semi-Annual Report: An employee who has a single cost objective has a position that is dedicated to a singular purpose. For instance, a special education teacher is considered to have a single cost objective because the teacher works only with special education. An employee who has a single cost objective will complete semi-annual certifications after the July through December pay cycle, and the January through June pay cycle. A semi-annual certification is a sign-off by the employee and the supervisor with first-hand knowledge of the employee’s work after the work has been completed.

Where employees work on multiple activities or cost objectives, a distribution of their salaries or wages will be supported by personnel activity reports (PARS) or equivalent documentation.

PAR or equivalent documentation must: (1) reflect an after-the-fact distribution of the actual activity of each employee, (2) must account for the total activity for which each employee is compensated, (3) must be prepared at least monthly and must coincide with one or more pay periods, and (4) must be signed by the employee and direct supervisor. The PAR must be supported with documentation of actual effort, not estimates. Supporting documentation could be, but is not limited to, a work calendar, work project, time log, or class schedule.

Statutory Reference: EDGAR 200.430(i)(1)

3.12 *Expense Reimbursement*

Board members and employees will be reimbursed for reasonable travel and subsistence expenses incurred in connection with official Board business. Reimbursement will be in accordance with Board approved rates and such procedures and standards for submitting

and documenting such expenditures as may be developed by the Chief School Financial Officer or provided in the approved Finance Manual.

3.13 *Fees, Payments, and Rentals*

3.13.1 Facility Use Fees – The Superintendent is authorized to develop a schedule of reasonable fees for use of Board facilities and property by individuals, groups, or organizations that shall be effective upon approval by the Board.

3.13.2 Copying and Other Charges – The Superintendent is authorized to establish a schedule of reasonable charges which, upon approval by the Board, will be applied uniformly in response to requests for copies of documents and records. Nothing in this policy or in any schedule of charges authorized hereunder creates or expands any entitlement to copies of records or access thereto beyond that which is established by law or specific Board policy.

3.14 *School Accounts*

Funds held in school accounts, regardless of the funding source, will be maintained and accounted for in accordance with the Board’s Finance Manual, Local School Finance Manual, and such procedures, rules, and regulations as may be developed by the Chief School Financial Officer or the Superintendent. The principal is ultimately responsible for all school funds and for ensuring that such funds are properly accounted for and secured. If funds held in a school account were raised or donated for a specific purpose, those funds should be expended for that purpose within a reasonable time period.

3.15 *Authority to Execute Contracts*

3.15.1 General Authority – The president of the Board, or, in the absence of the president, the vice-president, will have authority to execute contracts on behalf of the Board upon approval of the contract by the Board. The Board may also authorize the Superintendent to execute contracts on behalf of the Board as its chief executive officer.

3.15.2 Limitation on Authority to Bind the Board – Subject to the approval of the Superintendent, principals and other administrators have authority to enter into agreements with third parties only when such agreements are made in accordance with Board policy, finance manual(s) created under authority of Board policy, or with the express authorization of the Board.

3.16 *Affiliated Organizations*

3.16.1 School Sponsored Organizations – School-sponsored student organizations will be subject to Board policies and procedures concerning fiscal management and will maintain organization funds in school accounts. All books, records, and official

documents pertaining to the management of such organizations will be maintained at the local school and will be subject to examination and audit by the Board or the principal in the manner prescribed by the Superintendent and/or CSFO. The use of

funds collected, generated, or held by such organizations will be determined in accordance with the constitution, charter, or by-laws of the organization, with oversight by the sponsor of the organization, and subject to approval of the principal.

3.16.2 Other Affiliated Organizations – Other organizations that are affiliated with local schools including, parent and booster organizations, are permitted to operate or raise funds on Board property or at Board sanctioned events only in conformity with Board and State Department of Education policies, procedures, and standards concerning the fiscal management of such organizations. An affiliated organization shall either:

1) Operate under the direct supervision of the local school principal and/or athletic director, and shall work collaboratively with the CSFO to adhere to operating procedures for fundraising, purchasing and encumbering funds.

Or

2) Operate outside the control of the school. In this event, the organization will be required to:

- a. Obtain an employer identification number from the IRS.
- b. Provide a report of the annual audit of the organization to the school.
- c. The organization makes its financial records available to the school's auditors and authorized school employees upon request.
- d. The organization provides proof of a fidelity bond for the treasurer.
- e. The organization will not provide any payment or benefit to a school employee (or family member of a school employee) in violation of the State Ethics Law.

If an affiliated organization operating outside the control of the school fails to comply with the requirements established in option 2 described above, the organization will be required to operate under the direct supervision of the local school as identified in option 1.

This policy will be implemented effective August 1, 2020.

Revised 11/18/2019

3.16.3 Direct Supervision by Principal - School sponsored and affiliated organizations may come under the direct supervision of the school principal if the organization:

- (a) Collects admission to the school function,
- (b) Operates a concession operation on school property or at a school function,

- (c) Collects parking fees for the school function,
- (d) Operates a training camp that includes students of the activity it supports, or
- (e) Operates an exhibition or competition that includes students of the activity it supports.

3.17 Fundraising

Fundraising activities will be permitted on school or Board property only if the following criteria are satisfied:

- a. The activity has to have prior approval by the Principal and the Superintendent.
- b. The activity will be held at a time and in a manner that will not be disruptive to the instructional program or to any other school or school system activity or function;
- c. The activity is designed and intended to support a *bona fide* school or school system program or activity, or an activity that is consistent with the mission and purposes of the school system;
- d. Adequate provision has been made for the security and proper accounting of funds collected;
- e. Other information regarding the nature, scope, and purpose of the activity is provided to school officials upon request; and
- f. Appropriate arrangements have been made for any special activities to be held in conjunction with the fundraising event.

3.18 Employee On-Line Fundraising and Crowdfunding

Any property, money, or other resources that are obtained by a Board employee through grants, fundraising, online giving, or like means in the name of or for the benefit of the school system or its students becomes the property of the school system and are subject to board policies and procedures governing board property and resources. The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures governing the approval and administration of any outside fundraising or crowdfunding activities.

3.19 Child Nutrition Program

3.19.1 Use of Kitchen Facilities – Kitchen equipment purchased with Child Nutrition Program funds may only be used for providing meals as part of a federally

authorized meal program, including but not limited to the National School lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and After School Supper Program. If equipment is used for any other purpose, a DCS Child Nutrition employee must be on-hand to insure proper use and care of the equipment. The group/entity using the kitchen shall be billed for the employee's time worked at a rate specified by DCS to include base pay, taxes and fringe benefits, and the employee shall be paid through DCS payroll.

3.19.2 Procurement of Products and Services – The Superintendent may enter into a written agreement with the Child Nutrition Program at the State Department of Education in order to procure food and other food related products and services. The Board will comply with applicable state and federal laws and regulations governing participation in such child nutrition program.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-8-3-.01, *et seq.*]

3.19.3 Charged Meals – Program regulations do not allow a student to eat for free unless that student has been approved for free meals; therefore, it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to pay for a student's meals at the time they are received. Students and staff are encouraged to deposit money into their meal accounts regularly, whereby a draft of the account may be made on a daily basis as the meal is purchased.

The Child Nutrition Program Director and local school principals will develop a written contingency plan to provide meals to a student if funds are not available in the student's account at the time a meal is received. The school principal will be responsible for eliminating any outstanding indebtedness of students by the end of the school year.

3.20 *Worthless Checks*

The Superintendent is authorized to develop guidelines and procedures under which worthless checks will be processed and collected.

3.21 *Classroom Instructional Support*

The Superintendent shall develop procedures by which state allotments for classroom instructional support are made available for use by classroom instructors and for the purposes authorized by statute and corresponding state regulations.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-1-8.1(b)(7).]

IV. General Administration

4.1 Security / Access to Schools

4.1.1 Security Measures Authorized – The Superintendent, Director of Safety and Security, principals, and facility administrators are authorized to take reasonable and lawful measures to protect against personal injury, trespass, vandalism, theft, and like threats to personal safety, property damage, and financial loss to or on Board property or at school functions and activities. The Superintendent should be made aware of any extraordinary or special measures that may be proposed in anticipation of or in response to any unusual security threat or risk (e.g., unusual surveillance, assignment of additional security personnel).

4.1.2 Access Restrictions Authorized – The Superintendent, Director of Safety and Security, principals, and facility administrators are authorized to regulate and restrict access to Board schools, buildings, and facilities in order to maintain appropriate security, minimize disruption and distraction within the learning environment, or to avoid a potential risk of harm to a student or employee. To that end, the Superintendent, Director of Safety and Security, principals, and facility administrators are authorized to implement building-level requirements and procedures governing access to Board owned or controlled buildings, grounds, property, events, and activities by school and non-school personnel, including family members and relatives, vendors, attorneys, and other visitors, and to adopt “check-in” and “check-out” requirements and procedures for students and employees.

4.1.3 Adult Sex Offenders—Adult sex offenders who have been convicted of a sex offense involving a minor must:

- a. notify the principal of the school or his designee at least 24 hours before entering school property or attending the K-12 school activity;
- b. immediately report to the principal of the school or his designee upon entering the property or arriving at the K-12 school activity; and
- c. cooperate with any efforts undertaken by the principal of the school or his designee to discreetly monitor their presence on school property or at the K12 school activity.

For the purposes of this subsection, a K-12 school activity is an activity sponsored by a school in which students in grades K-12 are the primary intended participants or for whom students in grades K-12 are the primary intended audience including, but not limited to, school instructional time, after school care, after school tutoring, athletic events, field trips, school plays, or assemblies.

Adult sex offenders have a duty to comply with this policy, and it shall not be construed as imposing an affirmative duty of any kind on the school principal, his designee, or any other employee, agent, or representative of the school or school system.

4.2 *Outside Agencies*

Outside agencies that have obtained approval from the Superintendent or designee may provide services (e.g. physical therapy, occupational therapy, applied behavior analysis, vision therapy, orientation and mobility therapy, and mental health services) to Dothan City Schools on school property during the school day.

All other outside agencies providing counseling services to students will not be allowed to provide services to students on school property during the school day unless the counseling is the result of a referral through the Department of Human Resources (DHR) or is required by a court order.

The Superintendent or designee is authorized to develop procedures to implement this policy.

4.3 *Safe Schools Policy (Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco, and Weapons)*

4.3.1 Prohibition on the Possession of Firearms – The possession of a firearm in a school building, on school grounds, on Board property, on school buses, or at schoolsponsored functions is prohibited except for authorized law enforcement personnel and as provided by law. For purposes of this policy, the term “firearm” has the same definition as is found in 18 U.S.C §921.

a. *Penalties for violations* – In addition to any criminal penalties that may be imposed, the following penalties will be imposed for unauthorized possession of firearms:

1. *Students* – Students will be expelled for a period of one year. The expulsion requirement may be modified in writing by the Board upon recommendation of the Superintendent on a case-by-case basis. Students who are expelled for firearm possession may not attend regular school classes, but may be permitted to attend alternative schools or education programs established by the Board. Discipline of students with disabilities who violate the firearm possession policy will be determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with federal and state law. Parents of students who violate this policy will also be notified by the principal of violations.
2. *Employees* – Employees will be subject to adverse personnel action, which may include termination.

3. *Other Persons* – Other persons may be denied re-entry to school property.

b. *Notification of Law Enforcement* – The appropriate law enforcement authority, which may include the city police, county sheriff, and the local district attorney, will be notified by the principal of violations of this policy.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-1-24.1, 24.3 (1975); Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02; Federal Gun Free Schools Act, 20 U.S.C. 7151; Federal Gun Free School Zone Act of 1995 (18 U.S.C. §922(q))]

4.3.2 Prohibition on the Possession of Weapons – The possession of a deadly weapon or dangerous instrument in a school building, on school grounds, on school property, on school buses, or at school-sponsored functions is prohibited except for authorized law enforcement personnel. For purposes of this policy, the terms “deadly weapon” and “dangerous instruments” include but are not limited to explosives, incendiary devices, projectiles, knives with a blade length of more than two (2) inches, archery equipment, devices designed to expel projectiles at a high rate of speed, any device so classified under state or federal law, and any device either used or intended to be used in such manner as to inflict bodily harm, provided that the terms “deadly weapon” and “dangerous instruments” will exclude, to the extent permitted by law, devices and equipment that are used for the purpose of and in connection with school or Board sanctioned educational, team, or competitive activities.

a. *Penalties for Violations* – In addition to any criminal penalties that may be imposed, the following penalties will be imposed for unauthorized possession of deadly weapons or dangerous instruments:

1. *Students* – Students will be disciplined in accordance with the Board’s Code of Student Conduct.

2. *Employees* – Employees will be subject to adverse personnel action, which may include termination.

3. *Other Persons* – Other persons may be denied re-entry to school property.

b. *Notification of Law Enforcement* – The appropriate law enforcement authority, which may include the city police, county sheriff, and the local district attorney, will be notified by the principal of violations of this policy.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-1-24.1 (1975); Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02(1)(b)]

4.3.3 Illegal Drugs and Alcohol – The use, possession, distribution, and sale of alcohol and the illegal use, possession, distribution, and sale of drugs in a school building,

on school grounds, on Board property, on school buses, or at school-sponsored functions is prohibited.

- a. *Penalties for Violations* – In addition to any criminal penalties that may be imposed, the following penalties will be imposed for unauthorized possession of illegal drugs or alcohol:
 1. *Students* – Students will be disciplined in accordance with the Board’s Code of Student Conduct.
 2. *Employees* – Employees will be subject to adverse personnel action, which may include termination.
 3. *Other Persons* – Other persons may be denied re-entry to school property.
- b. *Notification of Law Enforcement* – The appropriate law enforcement authority, which may include the city police, county sheriff, and the local district attorney, will be notified by the principal of violations of this policy.

4.3.4 Tobacco – The use of tobacco products and the illegal possession, distribution, and sale of tobacco products on school property is prohibited. These prohibitions also apply to electronic cigarettes, vape pens, hookah pens, ehookahs, vape pipes and any similar type of device designed to deliver nicotine, flavor, and other chemicals via inhalation.

- a. *Penalties for Violations*
 1. *Students* – Students who violate the tobacco prohibition will be disciplined in accordance with the Board’s Code of Student Conduct.
 2. *Employees* – Employees who violate the tobacco prohibition will be subject to adverse personnel action, which may include termination.
 3. *Other Persons* – Other persons who violate the tobacco prohibition may be denied re-entry to school property.
- b. *Parental Notification* – Parents and guardians may be notified of actual or suspected violations of the tobacco prohibition whether or not the student is charged with a violation of Board policy, which includes the Code of Student Conduct.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-1-24.1 (1975); Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02(1)(b)]

4.3.5 Searches – Law enforcement agencies are permitted to make periodic visits to all schools to detect the presence of illegal drugs or weapons and may use any lawful

means at their disposal to detect the presence of such substances. The visits will be unannounced to anyone except the Superintendent and principal.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-1-24.1 (1975); Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02(1)(b)]

- 4.3.6 Drug and Alcohol-Free Environment – All students, employees, volunteers, parents, visitors, and other persons are prohibited from possessing, using, consuming, manufacturing, or distributing illegal controlled substances and alcohol while on Board property or while attending any Board sponsored or sanctioned event, program, activity, or function. Persons who are intoxicated or impaired by the use, consumption, or ingestion of any illegal controlled substance or alcohol are not permitted to be on school property, or to attend or participate in any Board sponsored or sanctioned event, program, activity, or function.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-1-24.1, 25-5-330 (1975)]

- 4.3.7 Adoption of Statutory Penalties and Consequences – Persons who violate the Board’s prohibition of firearms, weapons, illegal drugs, or alcohol will be subject to all notification, referral, suspension, placement, re-admission, and other provisions set forth in ALA. CODE §16-1-24.1 and 24.3 (1975).

4.4 *Accreditation*

The Board will implement and adhere to such accreditation policies, principles, standards, and procedures as may be established or required by AdvancED as a condition to receiving or maintaining accreditation.

4.5 *Use of Board Property*

- 4.5.1 Equipment, Supplies, Materials, Vehicles – Equipment, supplies, materials, vehicles, and other movable or consumable property owned by or under lease to the Board may not be used by or made available to persons or entities for private or personal use, benefit, or consumption, or for any non-Board related use or purpose. Such property may not be removed from Board premises except as necessary to serve a school or Board-related function or purpose, and with the knowledge and approval of the appropriate supervisor, administrator, or the Superintendent.

- 4.5.2 Use of Board Facilities – Schools and other Board owned or controlled facilities may be made available for use by sanctioned or generally recognized school support organizations if the use of the facility will not disrupt school operations or be inconsistent with the purpose and mission of the school system, and if adequate advance provision is made for security, supervision, maintenance, damage prevention, post-event clean-up, liability insurance, and other risk management measures appropriate to the proposed use.

Use of Board facilities for non-school organizations may be approved by the Superintendent or their designee if the foregoing conditions are satisfied and a rental contract (or the equivalent thereof) that includes a reasonable fee or rental charge and other appropriate terms and conditions is executed by the organization. Schools or school property may not be used for political functions.

4.5.3 Advertising – Board property will not be used for commercial advertising except upon such terms and conditions as may be expressly approved by the Board.

4.6 *Naming Board Facilities*

The Board shall have the authority to name facilities in the school system as it deems appropriate. The Board may desire to recognize the outstanding contributions an individual, either living or deceased, has made to the Dothan City Schools by naming a facility in honor or memory of the person.

4.7 *Complaints and Grievances*

4.7.1 General Complaints (Grievances) – Subject to the limitations set forth below and elsewhere in this policy manual, any employee or member of the public may present to the school system a concern, complaint, grievance, or request for corrective action regarding any aspect of school system operations. Before requesting corrective action or relief from the Superintendent, persons with such complaints, grievances, or requests should present them for resolution to the employee, supervisor, or administrator at the lowest administrative level who has the authority and ability to address the problem or to implement the requested action. The Superintendent is authorized to develop specific procedures that will provide for fair consideration and orderly review of complaints and grievances. Such procedures may not unreasonably burden or delay the presentation or processing of such matters, and will be subject to Board review, modification, and approval.

4.7.2 Limitations Regarding Availability and Application of General Complaint/ Grievance Policy – The general complaint/grievance policy and any procedures adopted thereunder do not apply to specific complaint or grievance policies and procedures that are established by Board policy or law for application to special factual or legal circumstances (e.g., sexual harassment grievance procedures; review of personnel matters under state law; “due process” hearings provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). In such instances, the specific statutory, regulatory, or policy-based process is the applicable procedure. The general complaint/grievance procedures that are authorized under the terms of this policy may not be invoked for the purpose of challenging or seeking review or reconsideration of adverse personnel decisions that have received final Board approval. A grievance may be based on an alleged misapplication of Board policies, regulations, or procedures, but may not be used to challenge the Board’s exercise of its discretion to adopt, approve, modify, or repeal a policy, regulation,

or procedure or on its failure to exercise such discretion (e.g., adoption of a school calendar, compensation policies, etc.).

- 4.7.3 Student Complaints and Grievances – Complaints, grievances, and requests for corrective action may be brought to the attention of the Board by or on behalf of students with respect to academic, athletic, extracurricular, or other nondisciplinary matters, issues, and concerns only after reasonable efforts to resolve the matter at the school and administrative levels have been exhausted. Administrative judgments concerning academic or curricular matters or participation in extracurricular activities may be set aside by the Board only upon a showing that the action or decision in question is arbitrary and capricious, fundamentally unfair, or that it violates Board policy or the student’s legal rights.

The Superintendent is authorized to develop specific procedures that will provide for fair consideration and orderly review of such complaints and grievances. Such procedures will not unreasonably burden or delay the presentation or processing of the complaint or grievance and will be subject to review and approval by the Board.

- 4.7.4 Student Disciplinary Matters – The Board may consider appeals of student disciplinary decisions or actions in accordance with standards and procedures specified in the Code of Student Conduct.

4.7.5 Americans with Disabilities Act Complaint Procedure -

- a. *Complaint Criteria* – Persons who believe that they have been discriminated against on the basis of disability in the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits covered by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act may file a written complaint with the ADA Coordinator.
- b. *Complaint Form* – The complaint should be in writing and contain information about the alleged discrimination including the name, address, phone number of complaining party and location, date, and description of the problem. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews or a tape recording of the complaint, will be made available for persons with disabilities upon request.
- c. *Complaint Process* – The complaint should be submitted to the ADA Coordinator as soon as possible, but no later than thirty (30) days after the alleged violation. The ADA Coordinator will meet with the complaining party to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within fifteen (15) calendar days of the meeting, the ADA Coordinator will respond in writing, and where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complaining party, such as large print, Braille, or audio tape. The response will explain the position of the Board and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint.

- d. *Appeal Procedure* – If the response by the ADA Coordinator does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complaining party may appeal the decision within fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt of the response to the Superintendent. Within fifteen (15) calendar days, the Superintendent will respond in writing, and where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, with a final resolution of the complaint.
- e. *Records Retention* – All written complaints received by the ADA Coordinator, appeals to the Superintendent, and records relating thereto will be retained by the Board for at least three (3) years.
- f. *Additional Procedures Authorized* – The Superintendent is authorized to develop such procedures as are necessary to implement this policy.

[Reference: 42 U.S.C.A. §12131, *et seq.*]

4.8 Risk Management

The Board may obtain such liability and other forms of insurance or enter into such risk management agreements, pools, cooperatives, and like arrangements, agreements, or undertakings as it deems necessary and appropriate to meet legal requirements or to protect the Board, its employees, or its property from risk of loss.

4.9 Emergency Closing of Schools

4.9.1 Authority of Superintendent to Close Schools – The Superintendent is authorized to close schools if such action is warranted by weather conditions or other circumstances that pose a risk to the safety and welfare of students and employees, or that render meaningful instruction impossible (e.g., loss of power or other utility services).

4.9.2 Make-Up Dates – To the extent not provided for in the school calendar, any days lost by reasons of an emergency closing will be made up and a revised school calendar approved, if necessary, to reflect any extension or adjustment of the school year required by such action, unless approval to waive the days is obtained in accordance with state law.

4.10 Internet Safety and Use of Technology

4.10.1 Access to Technology Resources – The Board permits restricted and conditional access to and use of its technology resources, including but not limited to computers, the “Internet,” network storage areas, and electronic mail. Such access and use is restricted to employees, students, and other persons who are engaged in *bona fide* educational and administrative activities that serve and are consistent with identified educational objectives or authorized support functions, and who, by

signing an “Acceptable Use Agreement” and/or by utilizing the school system’s technology resources, agree to abide by all Board policies, rules,

and regulations regarding technology use. The Acceptable Use Agreement will be developed by the Superintendent for approval by the Board.

4.10.2 Restriction or Loss of Technology Privileges – Persons who violate any Board policy, rule, or regulation regarding technology use may be denied use of the Board’s technology resources and may be subject to additional disciplinary action.

4.10.3 Ownership of Technology Resources and Data – All technology resources, including network and Internet resources, e-mail systems, and computers or other access devices owned, leased, or maintained by the Board are the sole property of the Board. Authorized board personnel or their designee may, at any time and without prior notice, access, search, examine, inspect, collect, or retrieve information of any kind from the Board’s technology resources, including computer or related equipment, files, and data, to determine if a user is in violation of any of the Board’s policies, rules, and regulations regarding access to and use of technology resources, for or in connection with any other matter or reason related to the safe and efficient operation or administration of the school system, or for any other reason not prohibited by law. Users of school system technology resources have no personal right of privacy or confidentiality with respect to the use or content of such resources.

4.10.4 Adoption of Rules and Regulations – The Superintendent is authorized to develop for Board approval additional or more specific rules and regulations regarding access to and use of its technology resources and to require adherence to such rules and regulations through such means as the “Acceptable Use Agreement” and application of appropriate disciplinary policies and procedures. Such rules and regulations will address or provide:

- a. Measures to block or filter Internet access to pictures that are obscene, that constitute child pornography, or that are harmful to minors;
- b. Restriction of access by minors to inappropriate material on the Internet;
- c. The safety and security of minors when they are using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications;
- d. Prevention of “hacking” and other forms of unauthorized use of or access to computer or Internet files, sites, databases or equipment; and
- e. Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors; and

- f. Restriction of minors’ access to harmful material.
- g. Educating minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyberbullying awareness and response.

4.10.5 Disclaimer – The Board makes no warranties of any kind, either express or implied, that the functions or the services provided by or through the Board’s technology resources will be error-free or without defect. The Board will not be responsible for any damage users may suffer, including but not limited to loss of data or interruption of service.

[Reference: 47 U.S.C. §254(h) and (l)]

4.11 *Data Governance and Use*

The Superintendent is authorized to establish procedures governing the storage, use, and sharing of data maintained electronically by the school system. Such procedures shall comply with applicable state and federal law and shall include provisions for data security (including physical security measures), access controls, quality control, and data exchange and reporting (including external data requests, and third-party data use). Nothing in this policy or in any procedures authorized hereunder creates or expands any entitlement to confidentiality of records beyond that which is established by law or specific Board policy.

4.12 *Political Activity*

Board employees may participate in political activities to the full extent permitted by the United States Constitution and federal and state laws securing the right to engage in such activities, subject to the following restrictions:

- a. Employees may not appropriate Board property or resources for use in political campaigns, and may not engage in partisan political activities (including but not limited to the distribution of campaign material or literature) during regular school or duty hours or at Board sponsored or sanctioned events, functions, or at activities at which the employee is on duty or assigned official responsibilities;
- b. Employees may not represent their political beliefs or positions on political matters to be those of the Board or other Board officials, or to falsely assert or imply that their political activities or positions are endorsed by or undertaken in the name of the Board or other Board officials.
- c. In order to avoid disruption to the classroom and the school, employees may not wear or display political buttons, clothing, or banners during regular school or duty hours or at Board sponsored or sanctioned events, functions, or at activities at which the employee is on duty or assigned official responsibilities.

- d. In order to avoid obstructing the parking lot or otherwise disrupting school activities, employees may not place large signs or billboards in or on personal vehicles in the school parking lot;
- e. Candidates and representatives of candidates for political office may not be invited or allowed to address student groups except when such candidates are participating in a forum or like format that is designed to provide all candidates the opportunity to participate. Such forums may be conducted only for appropriate age groups, and with the advance approval of the school principal and the Superintendent; and
- f. Political signs may not be placed on schools or school board property. Campaign literature and other material may not be distributed on Board property during the regular school or work day, and may not be distributed at school or Board sponsored events or activities in a manner that impedes the normal and safe movement of pedestrian or vehicular traffic, that creates any other safety hazard or risk, or that disturbs or disrupts the function, activity, or event.

[Reference: Ala. Atty. Gen. Opin. 2019-1]

4.13 *Automated External Defibrillators*

The Board recognizes that medical emergencies may arise on school property which warrant the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). The school unit has an AED for use by authorized personnel. The Superintendent is authorized to implement the AED program and develop all the necessary administrative procedures. The Superintendent may delegate specific responsibilities concerning the AED program to administrators or other personnel.

Although the Board authorizes the acquisition of AEDs, it cannot and does not guarantee that an AED or a person trained in its use will be available at any particular school site or school-sponsored event.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-1-45]

4.14 *Service Animals*

In accordance with regulations contained under Title III of the Americans Disability Act (ADA) at 28C.F.R. 36.104, Dothan City Schools makes accommodations for the use of a "service animal" to include "any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability including, but not limited to, a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, other mental disability, or autism. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for purposes of the definition set in the law." ADA regulations also include "miniature horses" in appropriate circumstances.

Dothan City schools will comply with all state and federal laws, regulations and rules regarding the use of service animals by students with disabilities under appropriate circumstances. Procedures governing this decision will be outlined by Dothan City Schools in compliance with ADA.

4.15 Social Media

4.15.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the orderly operation of the district's schools by establishing standards for the operation of school district social media accounts and personal social media accounts, and to differentiate between personal and School Related social media accounts and those accounts controlled by the district.

4.15.2 Delegation of Responsibility

The Public Information Office will develop procedures to implement and enforce this policy.

4.15.3 Definitions

1. Discriminatory or Harassing Comments – comments or imagery that attack or mock an individual due to his/her real or perceived race, color, national origin/ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion, or which otherwise constitute bullying.
2. Limited Public Forum – a government operated location where the public may comment and post online, subject to viewpoint neutral guidelines.
3. Non-public Forum – a government operated location where the public may not comment or post online; free expression by the public is restricted regardless of message or viewpoint.
4. School-Sponsored Social Media Account (School-Sponsored Account) – a social media account, regardless of platform, that is operated by or on behalf of a school district employee or School Board member, or their designee in his/her professional capacity, or on behalf of a school sponsored organization or group, and that is designed to further the educational mission of the school district by communicating with members of the school district community and the general public.
5. School-Related Organizations and Groups Social Media Account (School-Related Account) – a social media account, regardless of platform, that is operated by or on behalf of a volunteer, student, parent, alumnus, or other member of the public on behalf of a school-related organization or group, including but not limited to a PTO, Booster Organization, etc. school-related social media accounts are operated by volunteers as outlined above and not operated by school district employees or School Board members as a part of their primary employed function.

6. Personal Social Media Account (Non-School Account) – a social media account, regardless of platform, that is operated by a school district employee or School Board member for his/her personal use, including personal professional development. A personal social media account is not regularly used to promote or communicate about school district events or activities, or the activities of students nor identifies the individual as an employee of the district.
7. Social Media – forms of electronic communication, such as Internet applications and websites for social networking and microblogging, through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content, such as videos. Current social media platform examples include Facebook, MySpace, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Tik-Tok, Vimeo, YouTube, Flickr, Twitch, Twitter, Snapchat, WhatsApp, etc. Personal websites, web logs (blogs), wikis, online forums, virtual worlds, video-sharing websites and on-line gaming are also included in this definition.

4.15.4 Guidelines

Establishing a School-Sponsored Social Media Account

- Approval must be obtained from the Public Information Officer prior to creating any DCS social media presence. Notify the DCS Public Information Office when you create an official social media presence.

School-Sponsored Social Media Accounts

- School-sponsored social media accounts must remain professional, and consistent with the educational mission of the school district at all times. The operators of school-sponsored social media accounts are responsible for ensuring that content is accurate and stays current. Postings should be factchecked and spell checked.

Account Ownership

- School-sponsored social media accounts are owned by the school district, and operated by school district employees or School Board members on behalf of the school district. The Public Information Officer or his/her designee shall maintain a list of all school-sponsored social media accounts, along with a list of credentials to access all school-sponsored accounts. It is the responsibility of the individual who creates the school-sponsored social media account to report the account’s credentials to the Public Information Office.

Photos, Videos, & Livestreams of Students

- School-sponsored social media account operators may post photographs, videos, and livestreams of students engaged in the educational process or at school-related events unless the student’s parents/guardians have opted the

student out of FERPA’s directory information sharing, or if parents/guardians have declined to sign the district’s media release form. The operators of school- sponsored social media accounts are responsible for complying with this provision.

Public Comments

- All school-sponsored social media accounts shall operate as a limited public forum, where the public may comment publicly on the posts – subject to certain guidelines.
- Account operators must have the profanity filter set to “Strong” on Facebook and Instagram and hide any inappropriate comments. Postings and comments of an inappropriate nature or containing information unrelated to official or district business must be reported and/or deleted promptly.
- Operating as a limited public forum, school sponsored social media accounts are moderated and all comments are subject to review by Dothan City School moderators. All DCS social media accounts shall include a prominent link and additional information to the following comment guidelines, posted on the school district’s website. While comments will not be edited or screened for viewpoint, DCS reserves the right to remove any comment that includes any of the following:
 - - Points unrelated to the purpose and subject of the main post.
 - Complaints, concerns, or confidential information about individual students or employees. - Advertising or promotional materials.
 - Copyrighted material posted without the express consent of the copyright holder.
 - Words that constitute a criminal act or that solicit others to commit a criminal act.
 - Fraud or defamation.
 - Personally abusive language that is inherently likely to provoke a violent response.
 - Words that present a threat to any person’s health or safety.
 - Threats of violence.
 - Obscenity or illegal material.
 - Comments that do not meet reasonable standards of civility and decorum (see below).

Civility and Decorum

Comments that do not meet reasonable standards of civility of decorum may be removed. Commenters are reminded that this is a public-school system website and that students – most of whom are minors – are one of its main intended audiences. Students check DCS social media frequently and should not be exposed to comments that are likely to cause them emotional distress or that would be inappropriate in the school environment. Commenters are expected to refrain entirely from profanity, personal insults, and personal attacks against any person.

Disclaimer

DCS is not responsible for and does not necessarily endorse or oppose any points made by commenters on any DCS social media channels. Commenters are solely responsible for their own comments and are urged to exercise good judgment, including but not limited to the rules and expectations set out above.

- Individual comments or posts that violate the above guidelines may be deleted or hidden (if possible given the social media platform) without further notice. Posts may not be deleted simply because they are critical of the school district, or because they promote an unpopular opinion, if the post otherwise complies with the above guidelines.
- School-sponsored social media account operators may not block users from accessing social media posts on the account. The Public Information Officer shall refer any user who repeatedly violates the above guidelines to the Superintendent for further investigation and potential legal remedies.

Tagging

- School-sponsored social media account operators may tag the social media accounts of educational applications, products, and services, so long as the district and its employees do not receive financial or other tangible compensation for the tag.
- One-to-one communication with a student shall be limited to approved methods of communication as provided by the district.

Accessibility

- All content posted to school sponsored social media accounts shall be accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- The Public Information Officer or his/her designee shall implement best practices using available technology to facilitate access to school-sponsored social media content whenever practicable.

Copyright

The copyright for all content posted to school-sponsored social media accounts must be either owned by the school district, licensed by the copyright owner, or not subject to copyright protection. The operator of a school sponsored social media account is responsible for ensuring compliance with this provision. This is not limited to the use of music, book readings and etc.

Retweets/Reposts

- School-sponsored social media accounts may highlight social media posts by others by retweeting or reposting their messages, so long as the content of the retweet is furthering the educational mission of the school district.

School-Related Social Media Accounts ○ School-related social media accounts are not operated or controlled by the school district. These accounts are privately created, operated, and maintained, and are not actively monitored by the district.

- School-related social media accounts may not use the school district's logo, unless given express written permission by the Superintendent or his/her designee.
- The school district encourages the operators of all school-related social media accounts to be good- faith ambassadors of the school district, and to operate these social media accounts in a manner that represents the school district in a positive light.

Personal Social Media Accounts ○ Employees are expected to uphold the duties listed in Dothan City Schools Personnel Policy 5.1 as well as the Alabama Educator Code of Ethics in relation to their social media activity. Per the Alabama Educator Code of Ethics, 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.

- The school district does not actively monitor personal social media accounts. Nonetheless, should the school district administration or School

Board's attention be brought to an employee's personal social media post that demonstrates insubordination, cruelty, unlawful discrimination, other unlawful act(s), or that impedes the efficient and effective operation of the school district, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action. ○ Employees may not publish DCS's or another employee's confidential or proprietary information.

- Employees should remember that they may be held personally liable for unsanctioned or irresponsible social media postings on social media websites and elsewhere. At its discretion, DCS may discipline an employee for unauthorized commentary, content, or images posted on social media websites on behalf of DCS that are inappropriate, disparaging, disruptive, defamatory, pornographic, harassing, libelous, infringing on copyright or privacy, or that create a hostile work environment. Additionally, employees shall not use social media to libel or defame the Dothan City School Board or students. Should an account be hacked and material presented by someone other than the employee, it will be the employees' responsibility to provide evidence demonstrating that the publication was made by someone who did not have permission to do so.
- Employees may not send, share, or post pictures, text messages, emails or other material that personally identifies district students and their families in personal social media, communications, or publishing without parent permission for the particular purpose. Employees may not use images of students, emails, student exemplars or work-product, or other personally identifiable student information for personal gain or profit.
- Employees are responsible for the information they post, share, or respond to online, and must be mindful that any content on the Internet may be accessible to anyone. Educators should consider the implications of joining an online social network, including whether they would be comfortable if someone sent information from their social media account to students, parents, or other staff members. To avoid jeopardizing their professional reputation, employees are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the privacy policies, settings, and protections on any social media platforms to which they choose to subscribe and be aware that information posted online, despite privacy protections, is easily and often accessible to district students and parents, and may be republished or reported to administrators. Employees should ensure privacy settings are customized to be as restrictive as possible to ensure that social media communications only reach the employee's intended audience.
- Existing policies and guidelines that cover employee conduct on district premises and at school-related activities similarly apply to the online

environment in those venues. An employee engaging in inappropriate conduct, including the inappropriate use of social media during and after school hours may be subject to discipline. Additionally, the district may not be able to protect or represent employees who incur legal action in response to the employee's behavior on social media.

- **Friending/Following District Students** – Employees should not have online interactions with current district students on social networking sites outside of those forums dedicated to academic use. District employees' social networking profiles and personal blogs should not be linked to district students' online profiles. Additionally, district employees should use appropriate discretion when using social networks for personal communications and should limit this activity to off-duty hours. Educators should use caution when friending/following parents of students.
- **Contacting Students Off-Hours** – District employees should only contact district students for educational purposes and must never disclose confidential information possessed by the employee by virtue of his or her district employment.

4.15.5 Consequences for Violation of This Policy

Employees that violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Policy 4.15 adopted July 20, 2020.

V. Personnel

5.1 *Employee Qualifications and Duties*

5.1.1 General Requirements – Employees have a duty to perform their jobs responsibly and in a conscientious manner. In addition to any specific job requirements set forth in job descriptions or elsewhere, employees are expected to meet the following general performance and service standards:

- a. Employees are required to be punctual and to attend work regularly.
- b. Employees are required to perform the duties and responsibilities that are assigned to them by the Board, the Superintendent, or their supervisor(s). Such duties and assignments may extend beyond or outside the instructional day and may include off-campus functions, events, and activities.
- c. Employees are expected to treat all students, co-employees, visitors, and guests of the Board with respect. Employees are expected to demonstrate moderation, restraint, and civility in their dealings with others and, in general, to serve as appropriate role models for students in their behavior and demeanor.
- d. Employees are required to obey all laws, ordinances, Board policies, and supervisory directives, and are expected to follow the Alabama Educator Code of Ethics and other pertinent authority while carrying out duties for the Board.
- e. Employees whose duties include the instruction or supervision of students must provide effective supervision, discipline, organization, and instruction of the students.
- f. Employees shall not use a cell phone or other similar electronic communication device while driving a school system owned vehicle unless it is necessary due to an emergency situation.
- g. Employees must complete and submit required reports accurately and in a timely fashion.
- h. Employees must respect, protect, and exercise due care in the handling, use, and operation of Board property and equipment.
- i. Employees shall at all times maintain appropriate, “professional” distance from students and shall not engage in conduct (including communication of any kind) that constitutes, solicits, or suggests sexual, romantic, or inappropriately familiar interaction with students.

- j. Employees shall promptly disclose to the Board any fact that would disqualify them from employment or that limits their ability to perform their essential job functions. To permit an informed evaluation of the circumstances and in order to protect the school system and the students it serves, employees are required to report to the Superintendent, in writing, by telephone, or in person, within seventy-two (72) hours, any of the following:
 - 1. A felony charge, indictment, complaint, conviction, or plea agreement; or
 - 2. A misdemeanor charge, indictment, complaint, conviction, or plea agreement involving drugs or moral turpitude.

5.1.2 Special Requirements -

- a. *Work Schedules (Certified) –*
 - 1. *Teachers* – A specific work schedule for teachers will be set by the Superintendent or designee annually. Assignments and duties may extend beyond the instructional day and may include off-campus functions, events, and activities; conferences and meetings with parents; supervision of student arrival and departure; and preparation for the following instructional day. Teachers will be provided a minimum of thirty (30) minutes free of instructional and supervisory responsibilities each teaching day.
 - 2. *Principals* – At a minimum, Principals and Assistant Principals shall be on duty thirty (30) minutes before students are scheduled to arrive on campus and are to remain on duty until 4 p.m. or until their supervisory duties are complete, whichever is later.
 - 3. *Central Office Personnel* – The Superintendent is authorized to establish work schedules, including minimum work times, for central office personnel.
- b. *Work Schedules (Support Personnel)* – The Superintendent is authorized to establish work schedules, including minimum work times, for support personnel.
- c. *Professional Certification* – In addition to requirements established by the pertinent job description, professional employees must hold a degree from an accredited college or university and hold a current, valid, and properly endorsed Alabama Teacher’s Certificate as may be required by law or regulation issued by the Alabama State Department of Education, which

will be maintained in the Superintendent's office. A teacher who has completed the certification process but has not received the certificate may be employed on tentative or temporary compensation pending verification of certification from the State Department of Education. Upon receipt of such verification, appropriate adjustments will be made to the teacher's salary. If a teacher earns a higher certificate that merits increased compensation under the approved salary schedule, any salary increase will become effective upon Board approval following receipt of documentation of the new certification from the State Department of Education.

- d. *Teacher Assistants* – Teacher assistants must, at a minimum, possess (i) a high school diploma or its equivalent; (ii) a two-year diploma from a college or university (or the equivalent hours) or pass the Work Keys Assessment; and (iii) a certificate from the State Department of Education verifying a “clear” status resulting from a background check.
- e. *Bus Drivers* – In addition to the requirements established by the State Board of Education, a bus driver must: (i) hold a valid commercial driver's license, (ii) complete a minimum of twelve (12) hours of approved instruction in school bus driving, and (iii) satisfactorily complete a written examination driver's performance test approved or administered by the State Department of Education or State Superintendent. A bus driver must also meet any requirements of the entity providing the Board's automobile liability coverage.

5.1.3 Employee Dress Code -

- a. *Purpose* – The professional status of staff members is reinforced by appropriate dress and appearance. Since students learn by example, it is important that employees serve as role models for students. Moreover, the community's attitude toward the school system and the education profession is related to the manner in which employees present themselves. Research has proven that there is a direct correlation between appropriate dress and how others perceive the individual as well as the organization. In addition, professional attire can be a useful tool in classroom management in that it can project an image of respect and authority and can help to establish a sense of formality.
- b. *General Requirement* – The Dothan City Board of Education recognizes that professional attire helps set the tone of an educational system. All employees shall exercise good judgment in their choice of appearance at work by dressing in a way that is appropriate to the situation and in a manner that will invoke a positive impression with students and the community. Such professional dress should promote a working and learning environment that is conducive to high student and staff performance. Inappropriate

clothing, paraphernalia, grooming, jewelry, accessories, or body adornments that are in any way disruptive or potentially disruptive to the learning environment are prohibited. Employees should at all times be distinguishable from students in their attire.

- c. *Enforcement* – Principals and other administrative supervisors are delegated the authority and bear the responsibility for ensuring compliance with this mandatory policy and are expected to counsel and/or discipline employees they supervise on professional appearance in conformance with this mandatory policy. Any employee whose attire or dress is not professional in the opinion of the principal/supervisor shall be directed to conform to this policy. An employee, who is inappropriately dressed, in the opinion of the principal/supervisor, may be sent home and required to return to work in acceptable attire. The employee will not be paid for time away from work. Repeat offenses may receive written notification of their violations to be placed in their personnel file.
- d. *Procedures Authorized* – The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures for implementation of this policy. All administrators, teachers, clerical staff, members of the instructional staff (including paraprofessionals assigned to the classroom), and support staff shall dress in a manner and style in accordance with administrative regulations and procedures set forth by the Superintendent.
- e. *Authorized Exemptions* – In enacting dress code policy, the Dothan City Schools recognizes that there are occasions when individuals may need to wear specific clothing due to medical reasons or as a part of a bona fide personal religious practice. When such is the case, the employee shall provide documentation to his or her supervisor of the medical necessity or the bona fide personal religious practice that gives rise to the need for deviation from this dress code policy.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-27-4 (1975)]

5.2 *Hiring*

5.2.1 Application Procedures – Job applicants for all positions must file an application with the Human Resources Department of the Board. Applications must be completed in full. All information provided in the application must be truthful. Any misrepresentation of a material fact on an employment application may disqualify the applicant from consideration for the position and may subject an employee to adverse employment action, including termination.

5.2.2 Qualifications – Applicants must meet the minimum qualifications of the position as provided in Board policy, the job description for the position, the posted

advertisement for the position, or as may otherwise be established by the Board, applicable law, or regulation. Applicants must hold such degrees, licenses, certificates, and like credentials as may be necessary, appropriate, or customary for the position in question.

5.2.3 Hiring Authority – The Board is responsible for making all final hiring decisions, and no hiring decision is official, final, or effective unless and until it is approved by a vote of the Board. No principal, administrator, supervisor, or other employee has authority to hire an applicant without Board approval or to commit the Board to specific action regarding employment.

5.2.4 At-Will Employment – Except as may otherwise be provided or required by law, by contract, or by the specific terms of their appointment, all personnel are deemed “at-will” employees and may be terminated, demoted, reassigned, suspended, or disciplined with or without pay, or with reduced pay, and with or without cause.

5.2.5 Nepotism -

a. *Supervisory Relationships* – Employment decisions and relationships that violate any provision of Alabama law, including state ethics and nepotism laws, are prohibited. The Superintendent is authorized to take action to identify and correct violations of the policy in a manner consistent with applicable law.

b. *Employment of Family Members* – Board members, administrators, or supervisors may not use their positions to directly or indirectly seek or secure the employment of any family member as defined in the Alabama Ethics Law.

c. *Selection of Impartial Person* – When law or policy mandates the recusal of a board member, official, or employee (“disqualified official”) from involvement in a decision involving the employment or possible employment of a relative or other person and permits or requires an objective, neutral, or impartial person (“the surrogate official”) to exercise some or all of the functions of the disqualified official with respect to the decision or action in question, the surrogate official shall be deemed objective, neutral or impartial if he or she:

1. Is not related by blood or marriage to the disqualified official or the person whose employment status is at issue, or of any applicant in a multi-member field of persons under consideration for employment or advancement;

2. Does not work under the direct or indirect supervision of the disqualified official, of any person who selects the surrogate official, of

any person whose employment status could be affected by the action or decision at issue;

3. Has no personal or financial connection to the disqualified official, to any person whose employment status could be affected by the action or decision at issue, to any other person involved or affected by the action or decision at issue in a way that would call into question the surrogate official's objectivity, neutrality, or impartiality; and

4. By education, training, and experience has a sufficient understanding of the employment qualifications and other factors and considerations that bear upon the action or decision at issue to make an informed report and recommendation to the Board.

After considering any report or recommendation that may be made by the surrogate official, the Board may approve such recommendation or remand the matter in question for a different recommendation.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-22-15.1]

5.3 *Probationary Employment*

Employees are required to serve the maximum period of any probationary service provided or permitted by law before tenure, non-probationary status, or any other statutorily sanctioned form of employment security will be recognized by the Board.

5.4 *Non-Teaching Supplemental Duties*

Compensation in the form of supplements may be paid for noninstructional supplemental duties in accordance with rates specified or established for such duties in the Board's official salary schedule. Such duties include coaching and sponsorship of athletic support organizations (e.g., cheerleaders, flag teams, drill teams) as well as scholastic support activities (e.g., yearbook, service clubs, academic honoraries). Such supplemental duties are considered additional nonteaching assignments to be made and approved on an annual basis or otherwise as the needs of the school require. Such supplemental duties are not considered to be a part of a teaching contract or appointment, and no tenure, continuing service status, non-probationary status, or contractual right to continued employment or compensation for such supplemental assignment will be recognized or implied in the absence of a separate written contract of employment providing for such rights.

5.5 *Professional Development*

The Superintendent will develop and implement an ongoing program of professional training and development that is designed to enhance the competencies of professional and support staff. Employee attendance and participation in such training institutes, workshops, seminars, and programs may be made mandatory by the Superintendent. The unexcused

failure of an employee to attend or participate in such professional development activities may constitute grounds for termination of employment or other disciplinary action.

5.6 *Employee Conflicts of Interest*

Employees may not use their offices or positions for personal gain and must adhere to applicable provisions of the Alabama Ethics Law. Employees may only engage in outside employment under the following terms and conditions:

- a. Employees will not engage in outside business activities, operate a personal business, or render any service for another employer during such time as duties and responsibilities have been assigned by the Board. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, utilizing a cell phone, computer, or other electronic device to engage in such activities.
- b. Employees will not accept outside employment that would interfere with or impair the ability of the employee to perform duties as a Board employee effectively;
- c. Employees engaging in outside employment, subject to the above provisions, may not provide services to the Board or any of its schools;
- d. Employees may not accept work that could compromise the employee's independent judgment in the exercise of duties for the Board;
- e. Employees may not use or disclose confidential information acquired through Board employment for their personal gain or for the benefit of a third party.

5.7 *Employee Gifts*

Employees may accept gifts from students or other members of the public if the gifts are in accordance with the Alabama Ethics law and any other applicable law, provided that that a single gift from a person should not exceed twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) and that the total monetary value of the gifts from a person for that year should not exceed fifty dollars (\$50.00).

The Board allows employees to accept gifts or gift cards purchased from pooled donations within a class, team, or other school group or organization for the employee's personal use provided that the amount that each person gives should not exceed the above amounts.

Nothing in this policy should be construed to create restrictions on gifts beyond those that are specifically provided for by law or to allow conduct specifically prohibited by law. Any person with a question about the application of the Ethics law to a particular gift should contact the Ethics Commission for clarification.

5.8 Employee Evaluations

5.8.1 Certified Personnel – Certified employees (other than contract principals) will be evaluated in accordance with an evaluation program approved for use by the Alabama State Board of Education. Contract principals will be evaluated in accordance with rules, regulations, and requirements promulgated by the State Department of Education or as may otherwise be permitted by law.

5.8.2 Non-Certified Personnel – Non-certified personnel will be evaluated in accordance with criteria and procedures to be developed by the Superintendent and approved by the Board. The evaluation criteria and procedures will, at a minimum, include the following:

- a. A structured evaluation cycle or schedule that may include unannounced observations or assessments during the course of the evaluation period;
- b. A written evaluation form that specifies job-related evaluation criteria;
- c. Group or individual employee orientation regarding the evaluation process;
- d. An opportunity for the employee to confer with the evaluator following the evaluation; and
- e. An opportunity for the employee to disagree (in writing) with the evaluation and to have the disagreement maintained with the evaluations.

5.8.3 Use of Evaluations in Connection with Employment Decisions – Unless prohibited by law (including applicable regulations) or the terms of the evaluation instrument, employment evaluations may be considered in making employment decisions, together with such other information and considerations as may reasonably bear upon the wisdom, necessity, or advisability of the employment decision. However, employment evaluations are intended to enhance the overall quality of the school system’s instructional program and are not intended to confer, constitute, or give rise to any individual right, entitlement, or enforceable expectation of continued employment or advancement. Accordingly, except as may be specifically provided otherwise in state law applicable to “contract principals,” employees do not acquire any employment right or right of legal action based on any actual or alleged failure on the part of the Board or the evaluator to follow specific evaluation policies, regulations, or procedures.

5.8.4 Special Evaluation Situations – The Superintendent, the Chief School Financial Officer, and other employees who serve in positions of special trust or sensitivity may be evaluated by such means as may be permitted by law or applicable regulation or as agreed to in an employment contract.

5.8.5 Exempt Personnel – Except when required by law or contract, temporary, substitute, and occasional employees, or employees appointed to supplemental positions (e.g., coaches, extracurricular activity sponsors) will not be formally evaluated in those roles.

5.9 *Personnel Records*

5.9.1 Content of Personnel Files – A central personnel file will be maintained for all regular employees. The personnel file may contain information regarding the employee’s current assignment, payroll status, and work history, including but not

limited to job qualifications, certification, licenses, employment contract(s), evaluation data, disciplinary information, and such other documents, written materials, and data as may be reasonably deemed necessary and appropriate by the Board for sound and efficient personnel administration. Anonymous material and other matters that are prohibited by law, regulation, or Board policy from being maintained in personnel files may not be included therein. Employees may reasonably supplement or respond in writing to any material contained in the personnel file with which they disagree and such responses will also be included in the personnel file.

5.9.2 Alternate Data Storage – Personnel file data may be stored or maintained electronically or digitally.

5.9.3 Confidentiality – In general, the contents of an employee’s personnel file will be deemed confidential except for documents, information, and materials that are matters of public information or public record under applicable state or federal law.

5.9.4 Access to Personnel Files – The Superintendent, Board administrators (including principals), employees of the Human Resources Department, and other persons whose duties reasonably require access to personnel files are authorized to view, copy, and use the contents of personnel files for purposes that are required by or in keeping with their official duties on behalf of the Board.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-22-14]

5.9.5 Aiding and Abetting Sexual Abuse 20 U.S.C. § 7926

Purpose:

In accordance with the federal *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA)

“prohibition on aiding and abetting sexual abuse” of minors or students codified at 20 U.S.C. § 7926, the Board is authorized and directed to establish, implement and revise more detailed regulations and guidelines for the purpose of meeting the standards for adherence with the regulations.

Guidelines

Dothan City schools, in accordance with the federal *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) “prohibition on aiding and abetting sexual abuse” of minors or students hereby implement the following notice to all school employees, contractors, or agents of the guidelines listed below.

1. DCS prohibits any individual serving as a school employee, contractor, or agent “...*from assisting a school employee, contractor, or agent in obtaining a new job, apart from the routine transmission of administrative and personnel files, if the individual or agency knows, or has probable cause to believe, that such school employee, contractor, or agent engaged in sexual misconduct regarding a minor or student in violation of the law.*” 20 U.S.C. § 7926
2. DCS employees with specific duties in transmission of administrative and personnel files upon request of an outside agency for records will submit information pertaining to the individual for whom the request is made.
3. DCS employees are bound by this law to submit to requesting outside agencies any information with regard to an individual’s “... *sexual misconduct regarding a minor or student in violation of the law*” to include any records, knowledge of, or information regarding administrative and personnel records.
4. Exceptions noted in the regulations are as follows and reflects the areas where the law does not apply
 - a. “*the matter has been reported to law enforcement with jurisdiction over alleged sexual misconduct and properly reported to any other authorities as specified by law or regulation and*
 - b. *has been officially closed with notification (to DCS) of insufficient information to establish probable cause that there was sexual misconduct regarding a minor or a student in violation of the law*
 - c. *individual has been charged by law enforcement with, and acquitted or otherwise exonerated of alleged misconduct or*
 - d. *the investigation remains open and there have been no charges filed against or indictment of the individual within 4 years of the date on which the information was reported to law enforcement*”.

Penalties for violation – In addition to criminal penalties that may be imposed, the following penalties will be imposed for violation of this policy.

1. Immediate investigation to the alleged act of “aiding and abetting sexual misconduct regarding a minor or student in violation of the law”
2. Pending the results of the investigation, employees who violate this policy and law will be subject to adverse personnel action, which may include but are not limited to suspension, termination, and notification to appropriate law enforcement authority with jurisdiction.

5.10 Employee Leave

5.10.1 Work Attendance an Essential Job Function – Punctual, regular attendance is an essential job function of every job and position, and employees are expected to report to work when scheduled to work and to remain at work each working day.

5.10.2 Absences – Except as otherwise authorized under Board policy, employees may be absent from work only in the following circumstances:

- a. Illness, injury or other qualifying reason for sick leave or on-the-job injury leave under state law or the Family Medical Leave Act;
- b. Personal leave;
- c. Vacation leave;
- d. Professional leave;
- e. Military leave;
- f. Court leave;
- g. Other unpaid leave that is specifically approved by the Board upon a showing of substantial hardship or extraordinary circumstances.

Employees who know in advance that they will be absent from work must notify their direct supervisor of the expected absence in accordance with procedures specified by the Superintendent. In the event of an emergency or incapacity that makes advance notice impractical, employees must notify the Board of their absence as early as possible. Except as otherwise provided or permitted, an employee who is absent from work without approved leave will be considered absent without leave in violation of Board policy and subject to appropriate disciplinary measures. Employees who are approved for paid leave or absences will be paid at the regular daily rate of pay; however, a day of paid leave or absence will not be counted as a day worked for the purposes of computing overtime under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Pay will be reduced on a *pro rata* basis for leaves or absences not covered by sick, vacation, personal, or other appropriate form of paid leave. The continuation

of benefits during an approved absence is subject to the provisions of the particular benefit policy or plan.

5.10.3 Paid Sick Leave -

- a. *Persons Eligible for Paid Sick Leave* – All regular full-time employees are eligible for paid sick leave.
- b. *Earning and Accumulation of Paid Sick Leave* – All eligible employees earn sick leave days at the rate provided for in state law. Eligible employees may accumulate sick leave as provided by state law.
- c. *Use of Sick Leave* – Eligible employees may only use paid sick leave for absences caused by the following:
 1. Personal illness;
 2. Incapacitating personal injury;
 3. Attendance upon an ill member of the employee’s immediate family, defined as a spouse, parent, child, sibling or any person with a close personal tie;
 4. Death of a family member, including a spouse, parent, child, sibling, mother or father-in-law, son or daughter-in-law, brother or sister-in-law, nephew or niece, grandparent, grandchild, aunt or uncle;
 5. Death or care of an individual with whom unusually strong personal ties exist because of a relationship other than those listed above.

Taking sick leave that is not provided for by state law is a violation of board policy and may subject the employee to disciplinary action.

- d. *Certification* – Employees must certify that sick leave was used for one of the reasons provided in state law and specify the reason. If an employee is on sick leave for five (5) or more consecutive days or if there is probable cause to believe that an employee has abused or misused sick leave, the employee shall be required by their immediate supervisor to provide a statement signed by a doctor certifying to the illness or injury.
- e. *Restrictions* – The following restrictions shall apply to sick leave:
 1. Sick leave for certificated employees shall not be granted in increments of less than one-half (1/2) day.
 2. Sick leave for support employees shall not be granted in increments of less than two (2) hours.

3. Full pay for sick leave shall be allowed only if the absences fall within the definition of sick leave as defined in this policy and the employee has sufficient accumulated sick leave days.
4. Using the balance or any part of accrued and unused sick leave at the time of retirement will not be permitted, unless the employee meets the conditions for use of sick leave as defined above. However, an employee who is eligible for service retirement is entitled to use the accrued unused sick leave toward retirement as prescribed by rules of the Alabama Teacher's Retirement System.
5. No cash payments for accrued and unused sick leave will be made by the Board.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-1-18.1 (1975)]

5.10.4 On-The-Job Injury Leave – On-the-job injury includes an accident or injury to an employee that occurs in the course of performing job duties for the Board or when the employee is directed or requested by the employer to be on the property of employer and which prevents the employee from working or returning to the job. Employees who are accidentally injured on the job may be approved for paid “on the-job injury” leave without using sick days, provided that:

- a. The injured employee submits written medical certification from the attending licensed physician stating that the employee was injured and cannot return to work due to a specified injury, if there is a reasonable expectation that the employee will return to work and, if so, the expected date of that return. The Board may require a second opinion from a Board specified physician, at its expense.
- b. The employee submits a signed written account of the accident attested by a principal or department head within twenty-four (24) hours after the injury occurred. If the injured employee is not able to notify the Board, another person reasonably knowledgeable about the employee's condition and circumstances leading to the injury may provide the required notification.

Upon a determination that the employee has been injured on the job and cannot return to work, the Board may maintain the employee's salary and benefits for the period of incapacity caused by the injury, not to exceed ninety (90) days. An employee who is injured on the job may file a request for unreimbursed medical expenses and costs with the State Board of Adjustment. The Board will provide such reasonable assistance to the employee in filing the Board of Adjustment claim as is required by law, but assumes and will have no responsibility or liability for processing the claim or directly reimbursing the employee any unreimbursed medical expenses and costs. On-the-job injury leave will be administered in

accordance with and subject to the requirements and limitations imposed by state law regarding such leave.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-1-18.1 (1975)]

5.10.5 Personal Leave – All regular, full time employees are eligible for five (5) personal leave days annually (two days provided by State and three additional local days). Employee who take more than two (2) full days of personal leave during a school year will be charged the current daily rate of pay for the employee’s substitute (regardless of whether or not a substitute is employed) for each additional leave day taken.

Personal leave days are noncumulative from year to year. Personal leave must be requested in writing in accordance with such procedures as may be established by the Superintendent or the Board. Personal leave should not routinely be requested before or after a school holiday or in the first or last ten days of a school term.

The employee may convert any unused state-funded personal leave days to sick leave or compensation paid at the current daily rate of pay for the employee’s substitute. Unused, locally-funded personal leave days may be converted to sick leave days; however, compensation is not available for locally-funded days.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-8-26 (1975)]

5.10.6 Vacation -

- a. *Eligible Employees* – Twelve-month (242 day) full-time employees are eligible for paid vacation.
- b. *Vacation Benefits* – Eligible employees will earn 6 hours and forty minutes of vacation time per month, up to eighty (80) hours per scholastic year, subject to the following limitations regarding accrual of vacation days.
- c. *Accumulation of Vacation Time* – Employees may carry over unused vacation days from one scholastic year to the following scholastic year, but no employee may carry over more than two hundred forty (240) hours of vacation days for use in any fiscal year. Any accrued, but unused, vacation days in excess of two hundred forty (240) hours will be forfeited after the close of business on June 30th of each year. Vacation days may not be bought, sold or donated. Employees will be paid for accrued vacation time if not used prior to the effective date of resignation or retirement, subject to the preceding limitations regarding accrual of vacation days.
- d. *Scheduling* – Vacations must be scheduled with the knowledge and approval of the employee’s supervisor and shall be scheduled to ensure minimal

disruption to the operation of the school system. No individual employee may take in excess of one hundred twenty (120) vacation hours in any given month without the express written authorization of the Superintendent or his designee.

e. *Special Circumstances* –

1. Contract – The amount of vacation leave may be adjusted for personnel who are employed under a special contract (e.g., the Superintendent).
2. Past Accrued Time – Employees who had accrued in excess of two hundred forty (240) hours of vacation leave as of November 17, 2008, shall not forfeit those excess hours. Payment for those accrued excess hours shall be made based on the employee’s daily rate of pay in effect on November 17, 2008.

f. *Payment for Unused Vacation Time* – Payment of accrued, but unused, vacation leave up to the limits contained in the above section shall be made upon separation from employment provided notice to separate employment has been made and approved by Board action. Such request to be paid for accrued unused vacation leave shall be in writing to the Chief Financial Officer. This payment of unused accrued vacation leave shall not extend an employee’s contract. Payment of unused accrued vacation leave shall be made at the employee’s daily rate of pay in effect on the date of death, retirement, resignation, or other termination. The payment so made shall be in full discharge of the Board’s obligation to the employee for the payment of accrued but unused vacation pay.

5.10.7 Professional Leave – The Superintendent is authorized to grant professional leave with pay to Board employees to engage in educational activities which, in the

judgment of the Superintendent, serve the needs and interests of the school system. The number of days approved for such leave will be at the discretion of the Superintendent. All out-of-state travel must be approved by the Superintendent.

5.10.8 Military Leave – Military leave is available to all eligible employees in accordance with state and federal law.

5.10.9 Court Leave – Permanent and full-time employees are entitled to regular compensation while performing jury duty (ALA. CODE §12-8-25) or when the employee is summoned under subpoena or other legal requirement to testify at trial in a court of law or in an administrative proceeding constituted under the statutory authority of the agency conducting the proceedings. Paid leave is not authorized for employees to meet with attorneys, to attend depositions, or to otherwise prepare

for legal proceedings unless the presence of the employee is requested or required by the Board.

5.11 *Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)*

5.11.1 Eligible Employees – The FMLA is applicable to all persons who have been employed for at least twelve (12) months and have worked a minimum of 1,250 hours during that twelve (12) month period.

5.11.2 Medical Leave Provided by the Act – Under the FMLA, eligible employees are entitled to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid leave during any twelve (12) month period for one or more of the following reasons:

- a. The birth and first year care of a newborn child;
- b. The placement of a foster child or adoption;
- c. The care of an immediate family member, defined as a spouse, child or parent, with a serious health condition;
- d. The taking of medical leave because of the employee’s own serious health condition.

For the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child, the entitlement to leave for child care expires at the end of the twelve (12) month period beginning on the date of birth, adoption, or placement. Leave associated with the illness of a child will only be provided if the child is under eighteen (18) years of age or is incapable of self-care due to physical or mental disability.

5.11.3 Serious Health Conditions – The term “serious health condition” means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves the following:

- a. Any period of incapacity in connection with or following inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility.
- b. Continuing treatment by a health-care provider, to include any period of incapacity due to:
 1. A health condition, including treatment and recovery, lasting more than three (3) consecutive days, and any subsequent treatment or period of incapacity relating to the same condition;
 2. Pregnancy or prenatal care;

3. A chronic, serious health condition which continues over an extended period of time, requires periodic visits to a health care provider, and may involve episodes of incapacity (e.g., asthma and diabetes);
4. A permanent or long-term condition for which treatment may not be effective (e.g. Alzheimer's, severe stroke) and for which supervision of a health-care provider is required;
5. Multiple treatments for restorative surgery or for a condition which would likely result in a period of incapacity of more than three (3) days if not treated.

5.11.4 Military Family Leave Provided by the Act -

- a. *Qualifying Exigency Leave* – Under the FMLA, an eligible employee with a spouse, child, or parent on active duty or call to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation may utilize the twelve (12) week medical leave entitlement to address qualifying exigencies resulting from that service.
- b. *Military Caregiver Leave* – An eligible employee, who is the spouse, child, parent, or next of kin of a covered service member, is entitled to take up to twenty-six (26) weeks (including any medical leave provided by the Act) of unpaid leave during any twelve (12) month period (beginning the first day of the leave) to care for an individual covered service member with a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty while on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform the duties of the member's office, grade, rank, or rating. A covered service member is a member of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard and Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty.

5.11.5 Spouse Employed by the Board – Spouses who are both employed by the Board are limited to a combined total of twelve (12) weeks of family leave for the birth and care of a newborn child, for the placement of a child for adoption or foster care, for the care of a parent who has a serious health condition, and for

qualifying exigency leave. Spouses who are both employed by the Board are limited to a combined total of twenty-six (26) weeks for military caregiver leave.

5.11.6 Intermittent Leave – An employee may take leave intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule only when medically necessary to care for a spouse, parent, or child

or to receive planned medical treatment. Intermittent leave should be scheduled to the extent practicable so as not to unduly disrupt the operations of the Board. Intermittent leave may be further limited for teachers in accordance with federal law.

5.11.7 Use of Vacation and Sick Leave – If an employee has available sick leave, vacation leave or other applicable paid leave, the employee must utilize those forms of leave before taking unpaid leave under the FMLA. In that instance, the paid leave and the FMLA leave will run concurrently and the employee’s twelve (12) weeks of unpaid FMLA leave will be reduced by the paid leave utilized, as long as the need for such leave results from one or more of the qualifying reasons under the FMLA.

5.11.8 Notice – Employees seeking leave under the FMLA must provide thirty (30) days advance notice of the need to take leave when the need is foreseeable. When the need for leave is unforeseeable, employees should notify their supervisors as soon as possible. Employees must also provide notice of the need for qualifying exigency leave as soon as practicable.

5.11.9 Certification for Medical or Military Caregiver Leave – Every request for FMLA leave based upon the serious health condition of the employee or employee’s spouse, children, or parents, or leave as a military caregiver must be supported by medical certification issued by the appropriate health care provider on forms provided by the Board.

For leave based on a serious health condition of the employee or employee’s spouse, child, or parent, the Board reserves the right to obtain a second opinion from an independent health-care provider designated by the Board. If the opinion received by the employee and the second opinion conflict, the Board and the employee must agree on a third provider to issue a binding opinion. Both the second and third opinions (if necessary) will be at the expense of the Board.

5.11.10 Certification for Qualifying Exigency Leave – Certification will be required by the Board for requests for qualifying exigency leave. Certification must be timely submitted on forms available from the Board. For the first such request, certification may include a copy of the military service member’s duty orders or other military documentation.

5.11.11 Return to Work – The Board may require an employee who has taken leave due to the employee’s own serious medical condition to provide the Board with a healthcare provider’s certification in order to return to work. Any employee who takes leave under these provisions will be entitled to be restored to the original

position held when the leave commenced or to an equivalent position with equivalent benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment.

- 5.11.12 Maintenance of Benefits – Benefits accrued by the employee before leave is taken are not lost when approved FMLA leave is taken. Employees who are on approved FMLA leave will remain eligible to participate in benefit programs in which the employee was enrolled at the time of the leave, provided that the employee will continue to be responsible for payment of employee’s portion of any cost, premium, or like payment that is required to maintain eligibility for the coverage or benefit. An employee that does not return to work after FMLA leave, will be required to reimburse the Board for the cost of benefits coverage extended to the employee during the leave, unless the reason for the employee’s failure to return to work is (i) a continuing serious health condition suffered by either the employee or a family member, or (ii) other circumstances beyond the employee’s control.
- 5.11.13 Instructional Employees – Medical leave taken by eligible instructional employees is subject to further limitations and provisions established by the FMLA. The Superintendent or his designee is authorized to develop additional information and guidelines concerning Instructional Employees.

5.12 Sick Leave Bank

A “Sick Leave Bank” plan for full-time certified and classified employees is hereby established in accordance with applicable provisions of state law. A Sick Leave Bank Committee will be established to oversee the operations of the Sick Leave Bank in accordance with state law and the following provisions:

- a. *Sick Leave Bank Committee* – The Sick Leave Bank Committee will be composed of one member representing the Board and four members representing participating members of the sick leave bank.

Board Representative – The Member representing the Board will be appointed by the Superintendent, subject to Board approval.

Participant Representatives – The participant representatives will be selected by the sick leave bank members.

- b. *Procedures for Selecting Employee Representatives on Committee*
1. *Nomination* – Before each election of participant representatives, the Board will hold an open nomination period. Any employee who is eligible to participate in the sick leave bank may be nominated for one of the participant representative positions. Nominations must be written and must be received in the Human Resources Department by the deadline specified in a notice to be provided by the Superintendent or his designee through Board publications and other means of communication that are generally used for such purposes.

2. *Voting* – Each eligible nominee will be placed on the Sick Leave Bank Committee ballot. Voting will take place by ballot at Board facilities at the time specified or as may otherwise be provided by the Board. Supervision of voting will be by local facility personnel. Voting members will be required to verify their ballot by signing the Board’s voter record. Votes will be forwarded to the Human Resources Department for final tabulation. The four candidates receiving the highest number of votes will serve as participant representatives on the Sick Leave Bank Committee.

- c. *Term of Committee Members* – Sick Leave Bank Committee members will serve for a term of one year and may not serve for more than five years.

- d. *Chairman of the Sick Leave Bank Committee* – The Sick Leave Bank Committee will elect a chairman from among its representatives at its first annual meeting. The chairman will be responsible for recording organizational minutes, for conducting meetings, and for organizing meetings as necessary.

- e. *Meetings* – The Sick Leave Bank Committee will meet at least annually following each enrollment period. The Committee will also meet as necessary in its discretion.

- f. *Sick Leave Bank Committee Duties* – The Sick Leave Bank Committee will develop proposed rules and regulations for the Sick Leave Bank, to be submitted to participating members for approval. At a minimum, said rules and regulations must include those terms and provisions that are required by statute. The Committee has the authority to review both participation in the Bank and requests for leave to ensure compliance with state law, Board policy, and such rules and regulations as may be adopted by the Sick Leave Bank Committee.

- g. *Employee Participation* – Participation in the Sick Leave Bank is voluntary and open to all full-time employees of the Board. However, employee participation is subject to such rules and regulations regarding enrollment procedures, deposits, withdrawals, and participation as may be developed by the Committee.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-22-9 (1975)]

5.13 Equal Employment Opportunity

- 5.13.1 Unlawful Discrimination Prohibited – The Board is an equal opportunity employer. Personnel actions and decisions will be made without regard to factors or considerations prohibited by federal or state law (as such laws may from time

to time be amended), including but not limited to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, and genetics.

- 5.13.2 Implementing Regulations Authorized – The Superintendent is authorized and directed to implement such rules, regulations, procedures, and directives as necessary and appropriate to implement and enforce this policy and any law prohibiting discrimination in the workplace, including the designation of one or more complaint/grievance investigators, officials, or coordinators, the development of complaint or grievance procedures for responding to allegations of unlawful discrimination, the provision of training or dissemination of instructional materials and advisories to appropriate staff members, and the administration of corrective or remedial action in response to violations of the law and of this policy.

5.14 *Sexual Harassment*

The Board strictly prohibits unlawful discrimination in all of its programs, offices, departments and facilities. Sexual harassment, as defined by law, is a form of unlawful discrimination and will not be tolerated from employees or other persons associated with the Board.

- 5.14.1 Definition of Sexual Harassment – Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature when:

- a. Submission to such conduct or communication is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, of employment or other employment benefits provided by the Board;
- b. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions affecting the individual’s employment, or other benefits provided by the Board; or
- c. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

- 5.14.2 Examples of Prohibited Conduct – The following are examples of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment, depending on individual circumstances:

- a. Verbal harassment or abuse of a sexual nature, including graphic or derogatory comments, the display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, and sexual propositions;
- b. Repeated unwelcome solicitation of sexual activity or sexual contact;

- c. Unwelcome, inappropriate sexual touching;
- d. Demands for sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment or threats with regard to an individual's employment status.

5.14.3 Employee Complaint Resolution Procedure -

- a. *Reporting* – Any employee with reason to believe that he or she has been or is being subjected to any form of sexual harassment should report the matter immediately. Under no circumstances will an employee be required to present the complaint to the person who is the subject of the complaint.
- b. *Informal Complaint* – An employee may choose to submit a sexual harassment complaint to a supervisor for investigation and resolution at the departmental or local level without resorting to formal complaint procedures. If the supervisor is the subject of the complaint, the complaint may be submitted to the Superintendent for resolution. If the complaint is not resolved informally to the satisfaction of the complaining employee, the employee must contact the Superintendent to initiate formal complaint procedures.

5.14.4 Formal Complaint Procedure -

- a. *Persons Responsible for Receiving and Investigating Formal Complaints* – The Superintendent is responsible for receiving and investigating formal complaints regarding sexual harassment. The Director of Personnel is an additional official to which formal complaints can be reported. If the Superintendent is unavailable or is the subject of the complaint, the alternate should be contacted regarding the formal complaint.
- b. *Complaint form, contents* – Formal complaints should be made in writing, signed by the complainant, and fully describe the circumstances surrounding the alleged harassment. Harassment complaints that cannot be made in writing should be memorialized by the Superintendent or designated alternate official.
- c. *Investigation* – The Superintendent will promptly investigate the complaint, review the results of any investigation with legal counsel or other appropriate officials, make any findings that are supported by the investigation, and recommend appropriate action based on these findings. The complainant will be informed of any action that is taken as a result of the investigation.

- d. *Review by the Superintendent and the Board* – A complaining party who is not satisfied with the investigation or resolution of the complaint may request that the Superintendent take additional or different action or present the complaint to the Board for its review and action. In such case, the Board will render a final decision as soon as practicable.

5.14.5 Confidentiality – To the extent possible, reports of sexual harassment will be kept confidential; however, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

5.14.6 Retaliation Prohibited – No retaliation or adverse action may be imposed as a result of a good faith complaint or report of sexual harassment. False accusations that are made in bad faith or for improper reasons may result in disciplinary action.

5.14.7 Penalties for Violation – Any employee who violates the terms of this policy or who impedes or unreasonably refuses to cooperate with a Board investigation regarding allegations of sexual harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

5.15 *Reduction-In-Force*

5.15.1 Scope and Definition – This policy applies to reductions-in-force (layoffs) within the meaning of ALA.CODE §16-1-33 (1975). As used herein, the term “layoff” means an unavoidable reduction in the work force beyond normal attrition due to decreased enrollment or shortage of revenues. The term “layoff” does not include, and the provisions of this policy do not apply to, decisions to terminate or not to extend the appointment of occasional, temporary, or “at-will” employees, or to decisions not to extend or renew the employment of employees following the expiration of annual or other specified terms of appointment. The Board may declare a reduction-in-force as to the system as a whole or as to any component parts of the system (for example, one or more particular schools, departments, areas, groupings, or classifications of employees), as is called for by the facts and circumstances at the time. Any reduction-in-force declared and implemented by the Board is not subject to challenge or review under the Students First Act.

5.15.2 Criteria for Determining if a RIF is Necessary – The Board may declare a RIF and implement such if it determines that financial circumstances or enrollment data require such action in order to maintain effective provision of educational services. The Board may consider the following criteria, as applicable to the circumstances:

- a. The Board’s determination of its educational needs, requirements, and priorities;
- b. Current data and projected trends in revenue collection, anticipated expenditures, and/or enrollment;

- c. The extent to which cost savings or other appropriate administrative objectives can be realized by taking into consideration voluntary retirements, resignations, transfers, and other normal attrition in the workforce;
- d. Such other facts, circumstances or criteria that the Board deems reasonable given the circumstances.

5.15.3 Implementing Layoffs – Once the Board determines that the financial circumstances and/or enrollment data and/or projections require a RIF, the Board may implement elimination of positions and layoff of employees based upon consideration of the following criteria, as applicable to the circumstances:

- a. The comparative abilities of persons currently holding positions subject to elimination to meet the needs and requirements of the school system, taking into account such considerations as:
 - education,
 - training,
 - experience,
 - quality of job performance,
 - any special skills and aptitudes,
 - possession of necessary and appropriate licensure or certification, proficiency in performing a variety of tasks, responsibilities, and functions;
- b. Other factors being equal, the comparative length of employees’ service in the position and with the Board;
- c. Any nondiscrimination requirements that may be imposed by state or federal law;
- d. Such other facts, circumstances or criteria that the Board deems reasonable given the circumstances.

5.15.4 Recall – Recall of laid-off employees is not guaranteed. This policy shall not be construed in any way to create a right or entitlement to recall; the opposite effect is the intent of the Board. Circumstances permitting, and to the extent practicable, any recall of laid-off employees will be based on consideration of the criteria described above for layoffs and on relative length of separation from employment, other factors being equal. Under no circumstances will the Board be required to recall any laid-off employee after one year from the effective date of the employee’s layoff. Employees who are recalled within one year from the

effective date of their layoff will be credited with time-in-service, and the pay and benefit status they enjoyed on the effective date of their layoff. No pay, benefits,

tenure (or non-probationary) status, or other employment right will accrue or be credited to any laid-off employee for or during the time he was not employed.

A laid-off employee will be eligible for recall if:

- a. The facts and/or circumstances justifying the need for a RIF have changed materially;
- b. The nature of the position and qualifications therefore have not changed materially;
- c. The laid-off employee remains properly qualified, licensed, and certified; and
- d. The laid-off employee confirms in writing his/her availability for and interest in reemployment to the Board's Director of Human Resources within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of notice of layoff from the Board.

5.15.5 Notice – Notification of any implemented layoff, and any recall implemented, will be by United States certified or registered mail, hand delivery, or by other means that are permitted for such purposes by law. Upon receipt of notification of any implemented recall, a laid-off employee will have thirty (30) calendar days from the date of said notice within which to respond affirmatively to the notice of recall in accordance with such specific directions or instructions as may be contained therein. Any laid-off employee who does not so respond or who otherwise declines an offer of reemployment by the Board will be deemed to have waived any reemployment under the terms of this policy.

5.15.6 Reservation of Board Authority – Nothing in this policy will be deemed or construed to restrict or impair the authority of the Board to reorganize, consolidate, eliminate, reallocate, or otherwise modify the nature and configuration of its workforce.

[Reference: ALA.CODE §16-1-33 (1975)]

5.16 *Unauthorized Payments*

5.16.1 Notification to the Employee – Upon discovery of any unauthorized or erroneous payment or disbursement of funds to an employee, the Board will attempt in good

faith to notify the employee of such unauthorized payment and to reach agreement with the employee, if possible, regarding the amount and terms of repayment. Notification to the employee will consist of a letter mailed or delivered to the employee's last known address. The notice will specify the amount owed, the

method by which the amount was calculated, a proposed schedule of repayment, an opportunity for the employee to review or examine any documents or other evidence supporting the claimed overpayment, and an opportunity for the employee to object in person or in writing to the amount or manner of the proposed withholding to provide an alternative plan of repayment. Unless the

Board's ability to recover funds in question could be jeopardized by doing so, the Board will arrange a reasonable schedule of repayment so as to avoid undue hardship to the employee.

- 5.16.2 Retention and Recovery Authorized – If no objection to the proposed withholding is received within a reasonable time (to be specified in the notification letter), monies may be retained in the manner and to the extent described in the notification. If the employee objects to the proposed withholding, the Superintendent or his designee may, upon consideration of the objection and information and argument (if any) submitted in connection therewith, take such action as may be warranted under the circumstances and inform the employee in writing of the decision. If the employee is dissatisfied, he may contest the decision through the Board's complaint procedure. Monies may be withheld by the Board pending completion of the grievance process, provided that, should the Board later pay over to the employee monies that have been retained under authority of this policy, such payment(s) will reflect all appropriate deductions and will include accrued interest from the date of withholding at the rate specified by the then-effective rate applicable to interest on unpaid judgments under Alabama law. If, after exhausting reasonable efforts to do so, the Board is unable to contact the employee in the first instance, the Board may retain or withhold from compensation or other payments due the employee an amount sufficient to satisfy the indebtedness; provided that any such retention or withholding will be subject to review and reconsideration at the request of the employee.
- 5.16.3 Repayment Required as a Condition of Reemployment – The Board reserves the right to require repayment of any outstanding indebtedness as a condition to reemployment of any former employee.
- 5.16.4 Procedures Not Exclusive – The provisions, procedures, and method of review specified herein are in addition to those that are otherwise available to the parties under law for the retention or recovery of funds, and for administrative or judicial review thereof.

5.17 Drug and Alcohol Testing of Safety Sensitive Employees

5.17.1 Scope – The Board will conduct employee drug and alcohol testing for employees in safety sensitive positions as required by and in accordance with federal law. Testing will be required for all employees holding a commercial drivers’ license (CDL) or who occupy a safety sensitive position as designated by the Board (“covered employees”).

5.17.2 Prohibited Alcohol and Controlled Substance-Related Conduct – In addition to activities identified in other policies, rules, and procedures, Board employees are prohibited from the following:

- a. Reporting for duty or remaining on duty to perform safety-sensitive functions while having an alcohol concentration in excess of the standard set by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA);
- b. Being on duty or operating a vehicle while possessing alcohol
- c. Consuming alcohol while performing safety-sensitive functions;
- d. Consuming alcohol within eight hours following an accident for which a post-accident alcohol test is required, or prior to undergoing a post-accident alcohol test, whichever comes first;
- e. Refusing to submit to an alcohol or controlled substance test required by post-accident, random, reasonable suspicion, or follow-up testing requirements;
- f. Consuming alcohol or being under the influence of alcohol within eight (8) of going on duty, operating, or having physical control of a vehicle;
- g. Reporting for duty or remaining on duty when using any controlled substance, except when instructed by a physician who has advised the driver and the Board that the substance does not adversely impact the performance of any safety-sensitive duty;
- h. Reporting for duty, remaining on duty, or performing safety sensitive functions with controlled substances in the employee’s system.

In the event of a violation of this policy, the employee shall be removed immediately from safety-sensitive duties and shall be subject to such further actions, including disciplinary action up to and including termination, as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent and the Board.

5.17.3 Testing Program Authorized – The Superintendent is directed to establish a testing program whereby all covered employees will be tested for the presence of alcohol and controlled substances. The following tests may be conducted:

- a. *Pre-employment Testing* – Prior to the first time a covered employee performs a safety-sensitive function for the Board, the employee must undergo testing for alcohol and controlled substances.
- b. *Post-accident Testing* – Each surviving driver who is involved in an accident involving a school bus shall submit to testing as soon as practicable following such accident if such driver:
 - (1) Was performing a safety-sensitive function with respect to such vehicle and the accident involved the loss of human life, or
 - (2) Such driver receives a citation within eight (8) hours of the occurrence under state or local law for a moving traffic violation arising from the accident and the accident involved either:
 - (i) Bodily injury to any person who, as a result of the injury, immediately receives medical treatment away from the scene of the accident, or
 - (ii) One or more motor vehicles incurs disabling damage requiring the motor vehicle to be transported away from the scene by a tow truck or other motor vehicle.

Each such driver shall remain readily available for such testing and if he does not remain so readily available, may be deemed to have refused to submit to testing. Transportation supervisors shall provide drivers with necessary post-accident information, procedures and instructions, prior to the driver operating the school bus, so that drivers will be able to comply with the requirements of this policy.

The tests required by this subsection shall be administered as soon as practicable following the accident. If the alcohol test is not administered within two hours following the accident, the supervisor will prepare and maintain a record stating the reasons. If the alcohol test is not administered within eight hours, and the controlled substances test within 32 hours, the same record shall be made and further efforts to administer such tests shall cease.

- c. *Random Testing* – The Board will conduct unannounced random alcohol and controlled substance testing of its covered employees.

- d. *Reasonable Suspicion Testing* – A covered employee must submit to alcohol or controlled substance testing whenever there is reasonable suspicion of alcohol misuse or the use of controlled substances based on specific, contemporaneous, and articulable observations concerning the appearance, behavior, speech, or bodily odors of the employee.

- e. *Return-to-Duty Testing* – A covered employee must submit to return-to work alcohol and/or controlled substance test before being permitted to return to work following a positive alcohol or controlled substance test or other violation of this policy or federal regulations.

- f. *Follow-up Testing* – Any employee who continues performing safety sensitive functions for the Board, following a determination that the employee requires assistance in resolving problems associated with alcohol misuse or the use of controlled substances, shall be subject to unannounced follow-up alcohol or controlled substance testing as directed by the Board’s substance abuse professional (SAP).

- g. *Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Reporting-* FMCSA regulations require employers to notify drivers and driver-applicants that the following information will be reported to the Clearinghouse:
 - (1) A verified positive, adulterated, or substituted drug test result;
 - (2) An alcohol confirmation test with concentration of 0.04 or higher;
 - (3) A refusal to submit to a drug or alcohol test;
 - (4) An employer’s report of actual knowledge, as defined at 49 CFR § 382.107;
 - (5) On duty alcohol use pursuant to 49 CFR § 382.205;
 - (6) Pre-duty alcohol use pursuant to 49 CFR § 382.207;
 - (7) Alcohol use following an accident pursuant to 49 CFR § 382.209;
 - (8) Drug use pursuant to 49 CFR § 382.213;
 - (9) A SAP’s report of the successful completion of the return-to-duty process;
 - (10) A negative return-to-duty test; and
 - (11) An employer’s report of completion of the follow-up test.

[Reference: Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21)]
 Modified January 27, 2019

5.17.4 Administration of Program – The Superintendent is authorized to oversee the Board’s testing program, to contract with appropriate providers to implement the program, to develop guidelines, rules and regulations, to implement training programs, to develop and distribute educational materials and appropriate notices to covered employees, and to take such further action as may be required by federal law.

[Reference: Omnibus Transportation and Employment Act of 1991]

Adopted: January 27, 2019

5.18 Searches (Personnel)

- a. *Board Property* – All school system property, facilities, and grounds may be entered, inspected, and searched for any lawful purpose by Board officials or their designees at any time, without prior notice and to the fullest extent permitted by law. The right to enter, inspect, and search includes and extends to (but is not limited to) Board owned or controlled offices, desks, file cabinets, lockers, storage areas, computers, files, documents, data, and devices however and wherever kept, stored, or maintained.
- b. *Employee Property* – The Board reserves the right to inspect employees’ vehicles, purses, files, and other personal property if a supervisor forms a reasonable individualized suspicion that the property contains evidence of a violation of Board policy or contains any material, object, or substance that otherwise creates or presents a risk of harm or injury to the school, the workplace, or persons therein.
- c. *Use of Recovered Items* – Property, material, substances, information, or records that are obtained, discovered, or recovered as a result of a search may be retained and used for any lawful purpose.

VI. Students

6.1 *Admissions and Attendance*

6.1.1 Compulsory Attendance and Entrance Age – All persons between the age of six (6) and seventeen (17) years of age are required by state law to attend school for the minimum number of scholastic days prescribed by the State Board of Education unless the person holds a certificate of exemption issued by the Superintendent or is otherwise exempt under state law.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-28-3 (1975)]

6.1.2 Admission to Schools -

6.1.2 Admission to Schools –

a. Resident Students – School-age children who reside within the municipal limits of the City of Dothan, Alabama may be admitted to Dothan City Schools. For purposes of this policy, the residence of the student will be the residence of the custodial parent or legal guardian. If custody of the child is shared, alternating, or unclear, or if the child does not reside with a custodial parent or legal guardian, the domicile or actual physical residence of the child will control, except when there is evidence that the claimed residence of the child is not his actual residence, or that the claimed residence is fraudulently given as a means of avoiding or violating admission, enrollment, attendance, and residency standards and requirements. The board only recognizes legal guardianship documents as approved by a court of law. Educational guardianship forms are not recognized as legal guardianship.

b. Non-resident Students –

1. Dothan City Schools may allow non-resident students who are children of employees of Dothan City Schools or children of employees of the City of Dothan to attend Dothan City Schools if said students meet the following requirements:

- a) Child(ren) are in good academic standing, and are in the age-appropriate grade;
- b) Child(ren) are not habitually truant;
- c) Child(ren) are not under (or subject to) disciplinary action from prior school.

Their placement will be at the school or zone in which their parent works or may be determined by the Superintendent based upon enrollment or other factors.

- a. *Admission Policy for Homeless, Migrants, Immigrants, and English Learner Students and Children in Foster Care* – All homeless, migrant, immigrant, and English Learner students and children in foster care will have equal access to the same free appropriate public education, including public preschool education, provided to other children and youth and will be provided the opportunity to meet the same challenging state content and state student performance standards to which all students are held without being stigmatized or isolated.

The enrollment of homeless, migrant, immigrant, and English learner students and children in foster care shall not be denied or delayed due to any barriers that are specifically prohibited by applicable law, which may include the following:

- Lack of birth certificate
- Lack of school records or transcripts
- Lack of immunization or health records
- Lack of proof of residency
- Lack of transportation
- Guardianship or custody requirements • Lack of social security card

- d. *Homeless Students* –

1. *Enrollment.* Homeless students will be permitted to enroll without regard to residency status and may be entitled to other accommodations under federal law. Homeless students will continue in the school they attended before becoming homeless for the duration of their homelessness, or for the remainder of the academic year if the student becomes permanently housed during an academic year. Otherwise, a homeless student may be enrolled in any school in the system that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the student is living are eligible to attend.
2. *Dispute Resolution.* When a dispute arises regarding school placement, the system will immediately enroll the homeless student in the school in which enrollment is sought by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, pending resolution of the dispute. The school will provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth

with a written explanation of the decision, a statement of the right to appeal, and the procedure for appealing the placement decision. The principal of the school will notify the Board's Homeless Liaison of the dispute.

The Homeless Liaison will expeditiously carry out the system's dispute resolution procedures as detailed in the homeless policy.

[Reference: 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(A), §11432(g)(3)(E)]

- e. *Students in Foster Care* – A student in foster care will enroll or remain in the student's school of origin, unless it is determined that remaining in the school of origin is not in such student's best interest.

If it is not in a student's best interest to stay in the school of origin, a student in foster care may be enrolled in any school in the system that serves the attendance area in which the student is living, even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment. The school system will immediately contact the school last attended by the student to obtain relevant academic and other records.

[Reference: 20 U.S.C. §§6311(g)(1)(E)]

- f. *Students Expelled or Suspended from Other School Systems* – Students with discipline issues enrolling in Dothan City Schools must complete all discipline assignments before attending regular classes. This includes suspensions, alternative school placement, etc. Students permanently expelled from another school system shall not be permitted to attend school in Dothan City Schools. Dothan City Schools reserves the right to uphold any discipline action taken by the previous school system.

- g. *Required Documentation* – Students entering the school system for the first time, regardless of grade level, are not required to submit a birth certificate, but may be requested to submit a birth certificate or another

form of acceptable documentation to verify the student's age. A social security number may also be requested, but such request is voluntary and is not a requirement of enrollment.

In addition, students may also be required to submit other registration materials as school officials may reasonably require including, but not limited to, a certificate of immunization or an exemption as prescribed by the Department of Public Health and signed by a private physician or appropriate health department official. The Superintendent may accept alternate forms of evidence or modify otherwise applicable requirements as necessary and appropriate to accommodate migrant, immigrant, limited English proficient or homeless students.

- h. *Placement of Students* – The Board will determine the placement of newly enrolled students in accordance with state law.

6.1.3 Attendance Zone and Class Assignment -

- a. *Attendance Zone Assignment* – Students will be assigned to the school serving the attendance zone in which his parent(s) or legal guardian reside(s). Changes to attendance zones are recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the school board.

A student whose parent or legal guardian moves from one attendance zone to another during the school year will be transferred to the school attendance zone in which the new residence is located. The student may be permitted to remain in the school attendance zone that serves the former residence until the end of the semester with the approval of the Superintendent. A parent or legal guardian who has documented plans to move to a new attendance area during the first or second grading period of the school year may have his child enrolled in the school serving the new residence upon approval by the Superintendent.

- b. *Class Assignment* – Principals will assign students to classes in keeping with school accreditation standards and any procedures or criteria that may be established at the state, system or school level.

6.1.4 Absences and Excuses – Students are not permitted to be absent from school without a valid excuse. Absences will be designated as excused or unexcused. Excused absences will be permitted for the following reasons:

- Personal illness
- Hospitalization
- Emergency
- Death in immediate family
- Court subpoena
- Religious holidays
- Absences approved by the principal

Documentation supporting an excused absence must be submitted in a timely manner or the absence will be deemed to be unexcused. Excessive unexcused absences may result in a loss of academic credit or referral of the matter to juvenile or other appropriate legal authorities for investigation.

6.1.5 Truancy – Parents or guardians are required to ensure that students under their care, custody or control attend school regularly. Habitual or excessive absence from school may require Board officials to refer the matter to juvenile authorities or to initiate truancy proceedings.

6.2 *Transfers and Withdrawals*

6.2.1 Transfers – The Board may permit transfers between schools within the school system for good cause. Transfer requests must be submitted in writing and must include detailed reasons for the request. The Superintendent may approve or deny a transfer request in light of the stated reasons for the request, the capacity and resources of the schools, the student’s record (including behavior, grades, attendance, and other factors), and the best interests of the student and of the school system. The existence or availability of a transfer process does not create or give rise to any right to attend a particular school, and school assignment remains wholly with the discretion of the school system. Due to the need for the placement of staff, transfer requests will only be considered for the upcoming school year during March 1st through June 30th of each year. In addition, if hardship arises during the school year, the Superintendent may permit a student to transfer upon the request of the school principal.

6.2.2 Withdrawals – No student of compulsory attendance age will be permitted to withdraw from school except in accordance with state law and any withdrawal procedures that may be developed by the Superintendent.

6.3 *Student Fees, Fines, and Charges*

Reasonable fees, fines, and charges not prohibited by law may be established by the Superintendent. All such fees, fines, and charges will be collected and accounted for in accordance with the procedures, rules, and regulations to be developed by the Chief School Financial Officer or as provided in the Board finance or local school finance manual(s).

6.4 *Concussions*

Drawing on such medical and other authoritative publications and resources as may be available, the Board will:

- a. Develop materials and information that are designed to educate students and their parents or guardians about the nature of concussion and brain injury and the risks of continuing to participate in athletics after receiving a concussion or brain injury;
- b. Suitably summarize such materials on a concussion and head injury information sheet which is to be provided annually to current and prospective student athletes and their parents or guardians. Prior to the student’s participation in practice or competition, the head coach of the team must obtain and keep on file a copy of the

information worksheet signed by the team member and his or her parent or guardian.

- c. Develop a program designed to educate coaches on how to learn to recognize the symptoms of a concussion and how to seek proper medical treatment for a person suspected of having a concussion. The training shall be provided by qualified medical personnel or persons with special expertise in recognizing and responding to concussions and brain injuries, and shall be offered to every coach prior to the beginning of practice for the athletic team that he or she coaches.
- d. Promulgate or otherwise inform coaches of the statutory requirement that a youth athlete must be removed “from participation and may not return to play the day of the injury and until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed physician and receives written clearance to return to play from a licensed physician.”

The Board may use information and forms prepared by the Alabama High School Athletic Association as they may be revised from time to time, but nothing in any such materials should be interpreted or otherwise understood to create a duty or standard of care on the part of any person charged with its implementation.

[Reference: Ala. Code §22-11E-2 as amended by Act of Alabama 2012-314]

6.5 *Extracurricular Activities*

6.5.1 General – Students may be offered an opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities and organizations. Extracurricular activities must meet the following criteria:

- a. The organization or activity must be approved by the school principal and must have an assigned faculty supervisor or sponsor;
- b. The organization or activity must promote or serve the intellectual, cultural, personal, or physical development of the student in a manner that is consistent with the purposes of public education, the Board’s legal mandate, mission statement, policies, and regulations, and with applicable requirements of state and federal law;
- c. The organization or activity must operate under and subject to general supervision of school officials; and
- d. The nature of the organization and its activities are not inconsistent with and do not interfere with instructional activities of requirements.

Student participation or membership in such organization activities may be governed by the specific policies of the organization and is subject to review and approval by the principal.

6.5.2 Athletics – Participation in Board sanctioned athletic programs will be on such terms and conditions as may be approved by the Board and any athletic association of which the Board or the applicable local school is a member. Schools may establish terms and conditions for participation in such programs as long as school eligibility criteria are not inconsistent with system-wide eligibility or participation criteria, rules, regulations, or standards established by any athletic association or organization of which the Board or the school is a member, or any rule, principle, or provision of applicable law.

6.5.3 Eligibility Requirements – The Board prescribes the following regulations for eligibility in this school system to participate in all extracurricular activities.

- a. *Grades 10 – 12.* Students entering Grades 10 through 12 must, for the immediate preceding school year, have passing grades of at least a 70 composite numerical average and earn the appropriate number of credits in each of six (6) subjects that total six (6) Carnegie units of credit, including four (4) credits from the four (4) core subjects composed of English, science, social studies, and mathematics.
 - i. Physical education may count as only one (1) unit per year.
 - ii. No more than two (2) Carnegie units may be made up during summer school. If a unit(s) or subject(s) is repeated in summer school, the higher numerical grade for the unit(s) or subject(s) may be used to compute the composite grade average.
 - iii. Eligibility will be determined on the first day of the local school year and will remain in effect for one (1) complete school year. Students ineligible at the beginning of an academic year may become eligible at the end of the first semester if they meet all academic requirements at that time. *Bona fide* transfers may be dealt with according to the rules of the Alabama High School Athletic Association for sports and rules to be developed by this Board of Education as they pertain to other extracurricular activities.
 - iv. Each eligible student involved in athletics must meet the definition of a regular student as defined by the Alabama High School Athletic Association.
 - v. Any student who earns more than four (4) credits in the core curriculum in any given year or who accumulates a total in excess of the required four (4) per year may be exempt from earning the four (4) core courses in the succeeding year as long as that student remains on schedule for graduation with his/her class.

- b. *Grades 8 – 9.* Students entering Grades 8 and 9 must, for the immediately preceding school year, have a passing grade in five (5) subjects with a composite numerical average of 70 with all other rules applying the same as to students in Grades 10 – 12.
- c. *Grade 7.* Students promoted to the seventh grade for the first time are eligible.
- d. *Extracurricular Activities.* For the purposes of this subsection, extracurricular activities associated with athletics are defined as those recognized and sanctioned by the Alabama High School Athletic Association, and other extracurricular activities are defined as those that are sanctioned by a public school that are not related to a student’s academic requirements or success in a course(s). Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this policy, student participation in extracurricular activities offered by the school through math, science, band, choral, music, and other courses at events such as athletic events (pre-game, game, halftime, or other breaks), club conventions, parades, amusement park trips and competitions, trips by tour companies, performance at various meetings, etc. are extracurricular, and students academically ineligible under this policy will not be allowed to participate.
- e. *Regular Curricular Activities.* Regular curricular activities are defined as those that are required for satisfactory course completion.
- f. *Approval of Curricular Activities.* School sponsors are required to submit a request for each curricular activity that occurs outside the regular school day and/or school to the principal, Superintendent, and the local Board of Education for approval. Each request for full participation by all students, regardless of academic standing, in a curricular activity will be granted if the principal, Superintendent, and the local Board of Education approve participation in the activity as an extension of a course(s) requirement(s) and it is an event sanctioned by a state/national subject matter association.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02(18)]

6.6 Off-Campus Events

Student participation in and travel to off-campus events, concerts, functions, and activities, and the use of school buses or other transportation for such purposes may be authorized under and subject to the following terms and conditions:

- a. The destination is an activity, event, or function that services a *bona fide* educational or related extracurricular purpose, or is an athletic event or function sponsored or sanctioned by the school or the school system and the state athletic association;

- b. Adequate information regarding the trip (e.g., destination, duration, purpose, educational purpose, mode of transportation, nature and extent of student participation) has been provided to the principal, program director, and Superintendent in a timely manner.
- c. Adequate arrangements are made for supervision and other risk management considerations (e.g., parental permission, medical treatment authorization, special insurance requirements);
- d. If the school system is providing transportation, properly certified and qualified drivers have been selected and arrangements for the costs of the trip (e.g., salary, fuels, maintenance, lodging) have been made; and
- e. Prior Principal approval of the trip is obtained. In addition, out-of-state or overnight trips must be approved by the Superintendent.

The Superintendent is authorized to develop additional specific requirements for participation in and travel to and from official events and activities that are consistent with the terms of this policy.

6.7 *Student Publications*

The Superintendent is authorized to develop rules and regulations regarding student publications. Student publications are subject to and will be expected to meet standards associated with responsible journalism. The principal and student publication sponsor are responsible for the content of such publications.

6.8 *Equal Educational Opportunities*

No student will be unlawfully excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination in any program or activity offered or sponsored by the Board on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, disability, creed, national origin, sex, immigrant or migrant status, foster care, non-English speaking ability, or homeless status.

6.9 *Title IX*

6.9.1 Prohibition – In accordance with Title IX (20 U.S.C. §1681, *et seq.*), the Board strictly prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex or gender in its programs or activities, including sexual harassment, as defined by law and Board policy. Sexual harassment complaints should be filed and reviewed under the Board’s student sexual harassment policy. All other complaints under Title IX will be filed and reviewed according to the Board’s general complaint and grievance procedures.

6.9.2 Title IX Coordinator – The Superintendent is authorized and directed to designate a Title IX Coordinator, whose duties will include but not be limited to receiving and responding to Title IX inquiries and complaints.

6.10 *Voluntary Religious Expression*

The Board does not discriminate against students or their parents or guardians on the basis of their religious viewpoints or their expression of such viewpoints. Such views and expressions are treated in the same manner as nonreligious viewpoints, activities, or expressions.

Students may express their religious beliefs in all phases of their schoolwork without penalty or reward based upon the religious nature or content of such expression. Schoolwork is evaluated according to the academic standards and pedagogical objectives that otherwise apply to the work or activity in question. These standards and objectives included but are not limited to acquisition and/or mastery of factual information; development of analytical, problem solving, learning, critical thinking, communication, organizational, and social skills; college preparatory and career readiness training; proficiency in and appreciation of the performing arts; and the development of personal skills that are designed to facilitate attainment of the foregoing objectives, future academic success, and employability. The scholastic work of the system's students will be evaluated in light of the foregoing standards and objectives, academic and curricular guidelines and criteria established or approved by the State or Dothan City Boards of Education, and determined by evaluation, achievement, assessment, and testing materials, instruments, methods, and measures that have been generally recognized as appropriate for such purposes within the educational community and applied successfully in public school settings.

Students may organize and participate in religious activities before, during, and after school and have access to school facilities to the same extent students are permitted to organize and participate in other noncurricular activities to the extent that such access to or use of Board facilities does not constitute a constitutionally impermissible endorsement or sponsorship of the organization or violate any right established by or imposed by either the Alabama or United States Constitutions.

6.11 *Student Sexual Harassment*

6.11.1 Sexual Harassment Prohibited – Sexual harassment in any form that is directed toward students is prohibited. Persons who violate the policy will be subject to the full range of disciplinary consequences up to and including termination (for employees) and expulsion (for students) as dictated by the nature and severity of the violation and other relevant considerations. If appropriate, the circumstances constituting the violation may be reported to law enforcement agencies or child welfare agencies for further investigation and action.

6.11.2 Definition – For purposes of this policy, sexual harassment means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, other physical or verbal conduct or communications of a sexual nature, and any other gender-based harassment, whether initiated by students, school employees, or third parties, when:

- a. Submission to the conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the student's education, including any aspect of the student's participation in school-sponsored activities, or any other aspect of the student's education;
- b. Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for decisions affecting the student's academic performance, participation in school sponsored activities, or any other aspect of the student's education;
- c. The conduct has the purpose and effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's academic performance or participation in school-sponsored activities or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive education environment.

The following are examples of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment, depending on the circumstances:

- a. Verbal harassment or abuse of a sexual nature, including graphic comments, the display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, and sexual propositions;
- b. Repeated unwelcome solicitations of sexual activity or sexual contact;
- c. Unwelcome, inappropriate sexual touching;
- d. Demands for sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment or threats with regard to the student's educational status.

6.11.3 Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures Authorized – The Superintendent is authorized and directed to establish, implement and revise more detailed sexual harassment complaint procedures that are designed to provide students who believe that they are victims of unlawful sexual harassment with a thorough, discreet, and prompt internal procedure for investigating and resolving sexual harassment complaints. The procedures will be drafted so as to facilitate the gathering of relevant facts and evidence, permit timely assessment of the merits of the complaint, provide an opportunity for informal resolution of complaint where appropriate, eliminate any harassment that is established by the investigation, and prevent any retaliation based upon the filing of the complaint. The procedures will reflect due regard for the legal rights and interests of all persons involved in the complaint, and will be drafted, explained, and implemented so as to be understandable and accessible to all student population groups and ages.

6.11.4 Initial Confrontation of Accused Harasser Not Required – A student who invokes the harassment complaint procedure will not be required to present the complaint to the accused or suspected harasser for resolution. Students will be permitted to report allegations of suspected harassment to any appropriate Board administrator,

teacher, counselor, or employee, and such persons have a duty to promptly refer such allegations to the Superintendent or to take such action as may be required by the procedures established under “Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures Authorized” (6.8.3) above. In no case will any employee who is the subject of a complaint be permitted to conduct, review, or otherwise exercise decision making responsibility in connection with the processing of the complaint.

6.11.5 Notice of Policy to be Promulgated – The Superintendent will promulgate and disseminate this policy and the complaint procedures to the schools and will take such other steps and measures as may be reasonably available and expedient for informing the school community of the conduct prohibited by this policy and the recourse available to students who believe that they have been subjected to sexual harassment.

6.12 *Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment*

6.12.1 Consent – The Board will obtain parental consent before students are required to participate in a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED):

- a. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent(s);
- b. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
- c. Sexual behavior or attitudes;
- d. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- e. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
- f. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
- g. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parent(s); or
- h. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

6.12.2 Notice and Option to Opt Out – Parents will be provided notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of any of the following:

- a. Any survey that is designated to obtain protected information from a student, regardless of the source of funding;
- b. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening that is required as a condition of attendance, that is administered by the school or its agent, and that is not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a

student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law; and

- c. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or for the purpose of selling or otherwise distributing the information to others.

6.12.3 Inspection – Parents will be allowed to inspect, upon request and before administration or use, the following:

- a. Protected information surveys of students;
- b. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
- c. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

6.12.4 Special Provisions for Certain Students – Students who are at least 18 years old and emancipated minors under state law will be allowed to take the above actions in lieu of their parents or guardians.

6.12.5 Additional Policies and Procedures Authorized – In consultation with parents, the Superintendent is authorized to develop additional policies, and arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and in the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The Board will directly notify parents of these policies and procedures at the beginning of each school year and after any substantive changes are approved.

[Reference: 20 U.S.C. §1232h; 34 CFR Part 98]

6.13 *Student Records*

Educational records as defined by law or Board policy will be available for examination and review by authorized persons in the manner prescribed and to the extent required by law. Except where the context requires otherwise, the term “educational records” has the meaning given in 20 U.S.C. 1232g(a)(4). Copies of such records may likewise be provided to the extent required and under circumstances specified by applicable law or regulation. The Superintendent is authorized to establish administrative standards and procedures respecting access to such records, including a schedule of reasonable charges for the reproduction thereof. Parents will be provided required annual notification regarding educational records through the student handbook or by other appropriate means.

[Reference: 20 U.S.C. §1232g(a)(4); 34 C.F.R. §99.3]

6.14 *Student Health Services*

The Board may offer limited student health services that are designed to address minor medical issues that may arise during the school day or to assist with special or chronic health problems. In cases of acute or contagious illnesses, parents or guardians may be notified and required to pick up the student. If a parent or guardian is not available, the principal or school nurse may contact the Department of Public Health. School officials are authorized to take reasonable and appropriate steps to provide or arrange for the provision of emergency medical services to students who require immediate medical attention. In case of illness or accidental injury not requiring immediate medical attention, standard first aid procedures may be followed. The Superintendent is authorized to develop and promulgate procedures, rules, and regulations concerning anaphylaxis and the taking, administration, and handling of medication at school consistent with state law and appropriate health standards.

6.15 *Student Conduct*

The Superintendent will prepare and present to the Board for adoption and periodic revision a Code of Student Conduct (“CSC”), with input from teachers, school personnel, students, parents and guardians, and other members of the education community and, as appropriate, the community at large. The CSC will comprehensively describe the rules and standards of conduct and discipline that will be maintained and enforced within Dothan City Schools. The CSC will set forth the specific grounds for disciplinary action, the penalties, sanctions, or consequences that may be imposed for a violation of the CSC, the methods and procedures by which violations of the CSC will be determined, and any appeal or review procedures that are available to students. The CSC will incorporate applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, and the hearing and appeal procedures specified in the CSC will conform to applicable statutory and constitutional standards and requirements. The CSC may be incorporated in a student handbook and will be made available to all teachers, school personnel, students, parents and guardians at the beginning of each school year. The CSC will be deemed an extension of Board policy and will have the force and effect thereof.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §§16-28-12, 16-28A-1 to 3 (1975); Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02, 290-8-9-.09]

6.16 *Searches (Students)*

- a. *Board Property* – All school system property, facilities, and grounds may be entered, inspected, and searched for any lawful purpose by Board officials or their designees at any time, without prior notice and to the fullest extent permitted by law. The right to enter, inspect, and search includes and extends to (but is not limited to) Board owned or controlled offices, desks, file cabinets, lockers, computers, files, documents, data, and devices however and wherever kept, stored, or maintained.
- b. *Personal Property* – Personal property, including but not limited to vehicles, purses, wallets, gym bags, book bags, cell phones, computers, and “personal digital

assistant” (PDA) devices may be searched by authorized school officials, including school principals or their designees, when reasonable suspicion exists that the property contains prohibited materials, illegal substances, weapons, or other items that are reasonably deemed to present a risk or threat to the safety or welfare of the school community.

- c. *Personal Searches* – Students may be searched whenever reasonable suspicion exists that the student possesses prohibited materials, illegal substances, weapons, or other items that are reasonably deemed to present a risk or threat to the safety and welfare of the school community.

Student searches will be conducted by the school’s SRO, unless the SRO is unavailable to perform a search in a timely manner given the circumstances. If the SRO is unavailable, the search may be performed by a school administrator in the presence of another certified school employee. Any search performed by a school administrator must be conducted and witnessed by officials of the same gender as the student and in a way that preserves the dignity of the student to the extent practicable under the circumstances.

Refusal to submit to a search or to cooperate in a search as provided in this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action.

- d. *Use of Recovered Items* – Property, material, substances, information, or records that are obtained, discovered, or recovered as a result of a search may be retained and used for any lawful purpose.

6.17 *Seclusion and Restraint*

Alabama Administrative Code (AAC), Rule 290-3-1-.02(1)(t) was created in respect to the Seclusion and Restraint for ALL Students. In compliance with this rule, Dothan City Schools has provided this policy regarding seclusion and restraint. Dothan City Schools believes that schools should provide a safe and healthy environment in which children can learn, develop, and participate in instructional programs that promote optimum levels of academic achievement. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and staff are safe in school, and that students who may have behavior crises are free from inappropriate use of seclusion or restraint.

The use of seclusion or restraint shall directly follow guidelines and abide by all definitions set forth in the Alabama Administrative Code.

Seclusion or restraint shall not be used as a routine school safety measure. They shall only be implemented in situations where a child's behavior or action poses imminent danger of physical harm to self or others and not as routine strategies to address instructional problems or inappropriate behavior (e.g., disrespect, noncompliance, or as a convenience).

Any use of either seclusion or restraint shall be supervised, short in duration, and used only for the purposes of deescalating the behavior.

6.18 *Corporal Punishment*

The Board does not permit the use of corporal punishment as a consequence for inappropriate behavior. However, school personnel may use appropriate physical contact or intervention in response to emergencies or other circumstances reasonably requiring such action.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-28A-2 (1975)]

6.19 *Student Suspension (including Students with Disabilities)*

In order to maintain order, minimize the risk of potential personal injury, property damage or disruption, or to permit an orderly investigation and evaluation of a suspected violation of school or school system rules, standards, or policies, principals may temporarily suspend a student pending a conference with the parent or guardian of the student and a final disciplinary decision. Suspension may also be imposed as a disciplinary measure as provided in the Code of Student Conduct. Suspensions will be counted as excused absences. Make up work will be permitted for such absences unless permitting such work under the circumstances would be impractical or impossible, would serve no purpose, would place school personnel at risk of harm, or would be unreasonable in light of the grounds for the suspension. Suspension of students with disabilities will be subject to applicable limitations and requirements imposed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”) and its implementing regulations.

6.20 *Student Expulsion (including Students with Disabilities)*

Students may be expelled from school for offenses serious enough to warrant such action as provided in Code of Student Conduct or other Board disciplinary policies. Students who are recommended for expulsion may be suspended until such time as the Board meets to consider the recommendation for expulsion. The term of an expulsion may extend to the maximum permitted by law. The Board may impose such reasonable limitations on the student’s right to re-enroll in the school system following expiration of expulsion as may be permitted by law. A student who withdraws from school prior to the Board’s consideration of a proposed expulsion may not re-enroll in the school system until the Board holds a hearing or other appropriate proceeding regarding the recommended expulsion. Expulsion of students with disabilities will be subject to applicable limitations and requirements imposed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”) and its implementing regulations.

6.21 *Student Disciplinary Tribunal*

District level due process hearings are conducted by the Student Disciplinary Tribunal which hears evidence concerning charges of student misconduct that, if proven, may

require consequences greater than a nine school-day suspension. The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures governing the Student Disciplinary Tribunal in accordance with applicable federal and state law.

6.22 *Pending Criminal Charges*

Any student charged with violating a local, state, and/or federal law which constitutes a felony offense, or that involves any violent crime or use of any type of weapon, shall not be allowed to return to school until the superintendent approves the return. Any work missed shall then be classified as excused and the student given an opportunity to make up work following the policies set forth by the Dothan City Board of Education.

IDEA students who violate this policy shall be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary methods outlined in the IDEA and Alabama Administrative Code 290-8-9-09 (1).

6.23 *Electronic Communication Devices*

The Dothan City School Board recognizes that students carry personal electronic communication devices. Schools Board Members also recognize that parents provide these devices for their children so they can be in touch in case of emergency. School requires a students' attention. In recent times, personal electronic devices have become a distraction in the classroom and also a source of concern; especially when used to video or take pictures of other students, or bully using electronic methods. Please note that in case of extreme emergency, for example, a lockdown situation or active shooter, law enforcement shares that multiple cell phones and calls jam their systems and also false statements of the situation can be shared which often confounds the work of school officials, law enforcement, and emergency services. For the above reasons, the following is being proposed:

- 1) The unauthorized use of personal electronic communication devices will not be allowed during school hours.
- 2) Students are explicitly prohibited from using any type of electronic device to record audio or video segments at any school function or event, or to have the devices turned on during instructional periods.
- 3) Transportation will allow cell phones on the bus if the phone is on silent or vibrate.
- 4) Nothing in the policy shall prohibit a teacher or school official from allowing the use of these devices in a productive manner as part of an instructional lesson, approved specialized project, or for specific research with principal's prior approval per lesson plan.
- 5) Under extenuating circumstances (health condition of family members, etc.), students may be granted temporary waivers by the local administrators to keep the devices on.

Consequences:

- 1) If a student is guilty of unauthorized use of the device during school hours or school events, the device will be taken and held by the school official. The parent or guardian will be contacted and expected to pick the device up at the school.
- 2) Violation of this policy for the second time will result in the seizure of the device and five (5) day Out-of-School Suspension.
- 3) Subsequent violations will result in confiscation of device thirty (30)-day placement at P.A.S.S. Academy.
- 4) Refusal to surrender the device when asked by the school official will be considered a Code of Conduct Class III- Code 399- offense. The student will receive ninety (90) days at PASS Academy as a consequence.

Devices emitting notifications / sounds while NOT in use (i.e. in purses and or book bags) during instructional / class time is considered accidental. However, if device emits notification / sound more than once in the same classroom, or in other classrooms, on the same day, this will be considered a violation of the Personal Communication Electronic Device Policy. Therefore, the above consequences will be issued.

The distribution or presentation of electronic recordings or video material of students that may be construed as illegal, forms of bullying or harassment, or may cause disruptive activities within the school body, will also result in a Code of Conduct Class III-Code 399- offense, and 90 days at PASS Academy as a consequence. Students guilty of this level of offense for violation of this policy shall also lose their privilege to possess any electronic device on campus for the remainder of the school year, and may be subject to random searches of their possessions to ensure compliance with this prohibition. The board also reserves the right to legally prosecute any student suspected of criminal activity through the inappropriate use of electronic devices. The board assumes no responsibility for loss, theft of any personal cell phone or communication devices.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-1-27 (1975)]

Adopted 8/19/2019

6.24 Drivers' License

6.24.1 Drivers' License – Unless exempted from the requirement by Board policy, a person under the age of 19 years may not under state law obtain a driver's license or a learner's permit without being enrolled in school or meeting alternative criteria established by law. Additionally, a driver's license may be suspended or revoked if a student withdraws or fails to attend school. Students may be exempted or excused from otherwise applicable statutory requirements if their withdrawal or nonattendance is caused by circumstances beyond the control of the student. Circumstances beyond the control of the student may be found with respect to:

- a. Students who are mentally or physically unable to attend school;
- b. Students who are regularly and legally employed in compliance with the provisions of the Child Labor Law; and
- c. Students who, because of the lack of public transportation, are compelled to walk more than two miles to attend a public school.

Students who are denied a driver’s license by virtue of their nonenrollment may appeal a decision affecting the student’s eligibility for a driver’s license to the Superintendent. The appeal should be in writing and filed with the school principal within 15 days of the decision from which the appeal is taken, and should set forth the reasons on which the appeal is based. An appeal should be promptly forwarded to the Superintendent for review and final decision.

6.24.2 Administrative Procedures Authorized – The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures to implement the provisions of this policy and to comply fully with state law.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-28-40, *et seq.* (1975)]

6.25 *Student Parking Privileges – Substance Abuse Policy*

In order to promote the safety and welfare of students and others who work on or visit school campuses, to encourage the development of safe and responsible driving practices, and to serve the general purposes of maintaining a drug and alcohol-free school environment, students will be granted the privilege of driving and parking on school property only if they are free of the effects of alcohol or other illegal or controlled substances. Accordingly, any student who desires to drive a vehicle on school property or park on school property may be required to submit to periodically or randomly administered sobriety or drug tests as a condition to issuance of a permit authorizing the operation or parking of a motor vehicle on school grounds. Principals may impose reasonable additional conditions or requirements for the privilege of driving or parking a vehicle on school property including, for example, conditions relating to maintenance of academic and attendance standards and the payment of fees. Principals may also establish priorities for issuance and assignment of parking permits. The Board reserves the right to require that sobriety or drug tests or screenings be passed as a condition to maintaining parking or vehicle permits, or privileges relating to use of a motor vehicle. Such testing or screening may also be performed whenever a school official observes or is made aware of circumstances that provide reasonable suspicion or belief that the student has used alcohol, illegal drugs, or other substances in violation of the Board’s substance abuse policies. All such testing or screening will be performed in accordance

with local, state and federal laws, and procedures that are developed by the Superintendent for approval by the Board.

6.26 *Student Competitive Extracurricular Activity Substance Abuse Policy*

In order to promote the safety and welfare of students who participate in competitive extracurricular activities, to insure that such participation is neither impaired nor any risk of injury exacerbated, to provide incentives to students to maintain safe and healthful practices, and to promote a school environment that is free of alcohol and illegal drugs or controlled substances, the Board reserves the right to require any student who participates in extracurricular competitive programs or activities to submit to sobriety tests or screening for illegal drugs or controlled substances prior to, during, or following a competitive event, practice, competition, or at any other time while the student is under the supervision of the school system. Such testing or screening may also be performed whenever a school official observes or is made aware of circumstances that provide reasonable suspicion or belief that the student has used alcohol, illegal drugs, or other substances in violation of the Board's substance abuse policies. All such testing or screening will be performed in accordance with local, state and federal laws, and procedures that are developed by the Superintendent for approval by the Board.

6.27 *Harassment, Violence, and Threats of Violence and Suicide Awareness and Prevention*

6.27.1 Prohibition -

No student shall engage in or be subjected to harassment, violence, threats of violence, or intimidation by any other student that is based on any of the specific characteristics that have been identified by the Board in this policy. Students who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary sanctions.

6.27.2 Definitions -

- a. The term "harassment" as used in this policy means a continuous pattern of intentional behavior that takes place on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function including, but not limited to, written, electronic, verbal, or physical acts that are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any characteristic of a student, or by the association of a student with an individual who has a particular characteristic, if the characteristic falls into one of the categories of personal characteristics set forth in Section .3(b) below. To constitute harassment, a pattern of behavior may do any of the following:
 1. Place a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property.
 2. Have the effect of substantially interfering with the educational performance, opportunities, or benefits of a student.

3. Have the effect of substantially disrupting or interfering with the orderly operation of the school.
 4. Have the effect of creating a hostile environment in the school, on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function.
 5. Have the effect of being sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.
- b. The term “violence” as used in this policy means the infliction of physical force by a student with the intent to cause injury to another student or damage to the property of another student.
 - c. The term “threat of violence” as used in this policy means an expression of intention to inflict injury or damage that is made by a student and directed to another student.
 - d. The term “intimidation” as used in this policy means a threat or other action that is intended to cause fear or apprehension in a student, especially for the purpose of coercing or deterring the student from participating in or taking advantage of any school program, benefit, activity or opportunity for which the student is or would be eligible.
 - e. The term “student” as used in this policy means a student who is enrolled in the Dothan City school system.

6.27.3 Description of Behavior Expected of Students -

- a. Students are expected to treat other students with courtesy, respect, and dignity and comply with the Code of Student Conduct. Students are expected and required (1) to comply with the requirements of law, policy, regulation, and rules prohibiting harassment, violence, or intimidation; (2) to refrain from inflicting or threatening to inflict violence, injury, or damage to the person or property of another student; and (3) to refrain from placing another student in fear of being subjected to violence, injury, or damage when such actions or threats are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any personal characteristic of the student that is identified in this policy.
- b. Violence, threats of violence, harassment, and intimidation are prohibited and will be subject to disciplinary consequences and sanctions if the perpetrator of such action is found to have based the prohibited action on one or more of the following personal characteristics of the victim of such conduct:

1. The student's race;
2. The student's sex;
3. The student's religion;
4. The student's national origin; or
5. The student's disability.

6.27.4 Consequences for Violations – A series of graduated consequences for any violation of this policy will be those outlined in the Code of Student Conduct or any rule or standard adopted under authority of this policy.

6.27.5 Reporting, Investigation, and Complaint Resolution Procedures -

- a. Complaints alleging violations of this policy must be made on Board approved complaint forms available at the principal and/or counselor's office. The complaint must be signed by the student alleging the violation or by the student's parent or legal guardian and delivered to the principal or the principal's designee either by mail or personal delivery. At the request of the complaining student or the student's parent or legal guardian, incidental or minor violations of the policy may be presented and resolved informally.
- b. Upon receipt of the complaint, the principal or the principal's designee will, in their sole discretion, determine if the complaint alleges a serious violation of this policy. If the principal or the principal's designee determines that the complaint alleges a serious violation, the principal or the principal's designee will undertake an investigation of the complaint. The investigation will entail the gathering of relevant facts and evidence and will be conducted in a reasonably prompt time period taking into account the circumstances of the complaint. If the investigation establishes a violation, appropriate disciplinary sanctions will be imposed on the offending student(s). Other measures that are reasonably calculated to prevent a recurrence of the violation(s) may also be imposed by the principal or the school system.
- c. The person reporting the violation may, upon request, be given an explanation of the outcome of the investigation and of any steps taken to prevent a recurrence of the violation, subject to any limitations on the disclosure thereof that may be imposed by law. A person reporting a violation who is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal the decision in writing to the local Superintendent.
- d. Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any student who has reported a violation of this policy or sought relief provided by this policy are

prohibited, and are themselves a violation of this policy. Any confirmed acts of reprisal or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary sanctions that may include any sanction, penalty, or consequence that is available to school officials under the Code of Student Conduct. A student who deliberately, recklessly, and falsely accuses another student of a violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary sanctions as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct.

- e. The complaint form developed to report violations of this policy will include a provision for reporting a threat of suicide by a student. If a threat of suicide is reported, the principal or the principal's designee will inform the student's parent or guardian of the report.

6.27.6 Suicide Awareness and Prevention – To the extent that the legislature appropriates funds or the Board provides funds from other sources, the Superintendent is authorized to develop a program to implement the following statutory requirements of the Jason Flatt Act in an effort to prevent student suicide:

- a. Foster individual, family, and group counseling services related to suicide prevention.
- b. Make referral, crisis intervention, and other related information available for students, parents, and school personnel.
- c. Foster training for school personnel who are responsible for counseling and supervising students.
- d. Increase student awareness of the relationship between drug and alcohol use and suicide.
- e. Educate students in recognizing signs of suicidal tendencies and other facts and warning signs of suicide.
- f. Inform students of available community suicide prevention services.
- g. Promote cooperative efforts between school personnel and community suicide prevention program personnel.
- h. Foster school-based or community-based, or both, alternative programs outside of the classroom.
- i. Develop a strategy to assist survivors of attempted suicide, students, and school personnel in coping with the issues relating to attempted suicide, suicide, the death of a student, and healing.

- j. Engage in any other program or activity which the Board determines is appropriate and prudent in the efforts of the school system to prevent student suicide.
- k. Provide training for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students on the Board policies to prevent harassment, intimidation, and threats of violence.
- l. Develop a process for discussing with students local board policies relating to the prevention of student suicide and to the prevention of harassment, intimidation, violence, and threats of violence.
- m. Provide annual training for all certificated school employees in suicide awareness and prevention. This training may be provided within the framework of existing in-service training programs or as a part of required professional development offered by the school system.

Students may be required to participate in curricular activities developed to implement the statutory requirements of the Jason Flatt Act and are encouraged to participate in any other activities or strategies developed by the Board for that purpose.

6.27.7 Promulgation of Policy and Related Procedures, Rules, and Forms – This policy and any procedures, rules, and forms developed and approved to implement the policy will be published, disseminated, and made available to students, parents and legal guardians, and employees by such means and methods as are customarily used for such purposes, including publication on the Dothan City School’s Web site.

6.27.8 Construction of Policy – This policy is supplemental to other Board policies and procedures and does not repeal, replace, or supersede any other prohibition on harassment, bullying, cyberbullying, violence, threats of violence or intimidation found elsewhere in Board policy or procedure, including the Code of Student Conduct. This policy shall not be construed to allow harassment, violence, threats of violence or intimidation for any reason not specifically listed in this policy or to prohibit the Board from disciplining students for acts of harassment, violence, threats of violence or intimidation not specifically listed herein. Students who engage in harassment, violence, threats of violence or intimidation not specifically covered by this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct.

6.28 Supervision of Low-Risk Juvenile Sex Offenders

Pursuant to Annalyn’s Law, the Superintendent shall be notified by local law enforcement when a low risk juvenile sex offender is enrolled or attending school within the board’s jurisdiction

for the purpose of appropriate supervision during the school day and during school activities.

6.28-1. Definitions

In this policy, these terms shall have the following meanings:

- (a) “Plan” refers to the “individualized student safety plan” developed following the Student’s adjudication and/or enrollment in the school to serve as a behavior contract between contract between the Student and the School.
- (b) “School” refers to “all school property and school-sponsored functions including, but not limited to, classroom instructional time, assemblies, athletic events, extracurricular activities, and school bus transportation” related to the Student’s current school of record.
- (c) “Student” refers to “the low risk juvenile sex offender” designated by a juvenile court judge as having a low risk of re-offense.
- (d) “Teachers and staff with supervision over the student” or “Supervision team” refers to school officials or staff who have a specific responsibility for the Student, including the school principal, the Student’s assigned teachers and/or coaches, the Student’s counselor, and if applicable, the Student’s bus driver, during the subject school year and who will be privy to information regarding the Student’s status. Teachers and staff with only passing and/or general contact with the Student shall not be privy to information regarding the Student’s status.
- (e) “Victim” refers to the victim, if known by and attending the same school as the Student, of the offense for which the Student was adjudicated delinquent.

6.28-2. Notification

(a) Current Students

In the event a currently enrolled Student is adjudicated delinquent and designated “low risk” by the juvenile court, local law enforcement is expected to notify the local Superintendent and principal of the Student’s school in writing.

(b) Newly Enrolled Students

In the event a Student seeks to enroll in the district as a new student, and that Student has been previously designated as a low risk juvenile sex offender, local law enforcement is expected to notify the local Superintendent and principal of the Student’s school in writing.

(c) Students That Change Schools Within the District

In the event a currently enrolled Student transfers to another school in the district or is promoted to another school in the district, the principal of the original school should notify designated law enforcement of the change as soon as practicable.

Following that notification, the principal of the original school should orally or in writing brief the principal of the new school regarding the original Plan and the transferring Student's status and circumstances. Regardless, the principal of the prior school must provide the Student's records and Safety Plan to the principal of the new school as soon as practicable.

The new principal should review the Plan and meet with the Student, the Student's parent or guardian, and the anticipated new Supervision Team to determine whether the current terms are sufficient or should be adjusted based on the Student's circumstances.

(d) School Staff Changes

In the event the principal or a member of the Supervision Team leaves his position or is no longer responsible for supervising the Student, a replacement team member should be named, if necessary and appropriate, and briefed by the principal or the most senior member of the Supervision Team regarding the Student's status and Plan. The Student, his parent or guardian, and other members of the Supervision Team should be notified of changes to the Supervision Team within a reasonable timeframe.

6.28-3. Plan Development and Maintenance

Upon proper notification from law enforcement, the Student's principal or designee will call together the anticipated Supervision Team to meet with the Student and/or the Student's parent or guardian to develop an appropriate Plan. This meeting should take place within 10 school days or as soon as practicable. In the event the Student's parent or guardian is unable or unwilling to meet, the principal or designee and the Supervision Team should meet with the Student within a reasonable timeframe to develop an appropriate Plan. In the event the Victim attends the same school as the Student, the plan should include measures to reduce the likelihood of Victim and Student interaction. The terms of the Plan and any updates to it must be memorialized in writing and approved by the principal or designee before being distributed to the Student and the Student's parent or guardian, as well as the Supervision Team. The principal or designee should meet with the Student, the Student's parent or guardian, and the Supervision Team at least annually, but as often as deemed necessary by the principal or designee to assess the Student's status and to determine whether adjustments should be made to the Plan.

6.28-4. Supervision

The Student will be subject to the general Student Code of Conduct and any other conditions deemed necessary by the principal or designee as incorporated in the Student's Plan. Members of the Supervision Team should report any suspected violations of the Plan to the principal or designee. The school officials and staff responsible for supervising the Student on a daily basis should do so in a manner that is discrete and unobtrusive.

6.28-5. Students with Disabilities

Discipline of Students with disabilities will be subject to applicable limitations and requirements imposed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and/or 6.28-504 of the Rehabilitation Act and implementing regulations.

6.28-6. Violations of the Plan

In the event the Student violates the Student Code of Conduct or the Plan, the Student may be subject to discipline pursuant to board policy and/or reassessment of the Plan's conditions.

6.28-7. Challenges to the Plan

In the event the Student and/or his parent or guardian object to conditions of the Plan or the application of a sanction, a challenge must be submitted in writing to the Superintendent or his designee to consider whether adjustment of the Plan or response modification is warranted. The Superintendent's decision shall be final. A response that constitutes disciplinary action will adhere to the applicable School disciplinary policies and procedures and the Student will be afforded process due thereunder.

6.28-8. Confidentiality

Information received by school officials or staff related to the Student's delinquent status must be treated as confidential from other students, staff members, officials and stakeholders. Any document identifying the Student's status should be safeguarded from unintentional disclosure by the members of the Supervision Team. Any school official or school employee who improperly discloses the Student's status to any other person may be subject to school discipline and/or criminal charges as provided by law.

6.28-9. Retaliation

Members of the Supervision Team should make every effort to treat the Student with the same respect and courtesy to which every student is entitled. The Team is reminded that the Student has been deemed by the juvenile court as not likely to

reoffend and should be encouraged to fully integrate into the student body as a successful student. Mistreatment of any student may be cause for discipline.

6.28-10. Procedures

The Superintendent shall have the authority to develop appropriate training and additional procedures for staff members in furtherance of this policy.

Legal Reference: *Ala. Act No. 2018-528, Ala. Code § 16-1-51.1 (1975).*

Adopted 11/18/2019

6.29 Bullying, Intimidation, Violence, and Threats of Violence Prohibited.

No student shall engage in nor should any be subjected to bullying, violence, threats of violence or intimidation by any other student that is based on any of the specific characteristics set forth in this policy. Students who violate this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanctions as specified in the Student Code of Conduct, subject to the investigating school administrator's authority and decision.

6.29.1: Definitions

In this policy, these terms shall have the following meanings:

- (a) "Bullying" means a continuous pattern of intentional behavior on or off of school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function including, but not limited to, cyberbullying or written, electronic, verbal, or physical actions that are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any characteristic of a student, or by the association of a student with an individual who has a particular characteristic, if the characteristic falls into one of the categories of personal characteristics contained in this policy. To constitute bullying, a pattern of behavior may do any of the following:
- Place a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property.
 - Have the effect of substantially interfering with the educational performance, opportunities, or benefits of a student.
 - Have the effect of substantially disrupting or interfering with the orderly operation of the school.
 - Have the effect of creating a hostile environment in the school, on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function.

- Have the effect of being sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.
- (b) “Hostile environment” means the perception by an affected student that the conduct of another student constitutes a threat of violence or bullying and that the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person, under the circumstances, would agree that the conduct constitutes bullying, threat of assault, or assault.
- (c) “Violence” means the unjustified infliction of physical force by a student with the intent to cause injury to another student or damage to the property of another student.
- (d) “Threat” means a statement of an intention to inflict pain, injury, damage, or other hostile action to cause fear of harm. The intention may be communicated through an electronic, written, verbal, or physical act to cause fear, mental distress, or interference in the school environment. The intention may be expressly stated or implied and the person communicating the threat has the ability to carry out the threat.
- (e) “Threat of violence” means an unjustified expression of intention to inflict injury or damage that is made by a student and directed to another student.
- (f) “Intimidation” means an unjustified threat or other action that is intended to cause fear or apprehension in a student.
- (g) “Student” as used in this policy means a person who is enrolled in <INSERT SYSTEM NAME> public school system.

6.29.2: Description of Behavior Expected of Students

- (a) Students are expected to treat other students with courtesy, respect, and dignity and comply with the Code of Student Conduct. Students are expected and required (1) to comply with the requirements of law, policy, regulation, and rules prohibiting bullying, violence, or intimidation; (2) to refrain from inflicting or threatening to inflict violence, injury, or damage to the person or property of another student, and (3) to refrain from placing another student in fear of being subjected to violence, injury, or damage when such actions or threats are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any personal characteristic of the student that is identified in this policy.
- (b) Bullying, intimidation, violence, or threats of violence are prohibited and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary consequences and/or sanctions if the perpetrator of such action is found to have based the prohibited action on one or more of the following personal characteristics of the student:
- Race

- Sex
- Religion
- National origin
- Disability

6.29.3: Consequences for Violations

A series of graduated consequences for any violation of this policy will be those outlined in the Code of Student Conduct or any rule or standard adopted under authority of this policy.

6.29.4: Reporting, Investigation, and Complaint Resolution Procedures

(a) Complaints alleging violations of this policy may be made on a Board-approved complaint form available in the handbook, on the website, or at the school's office. The complaint must be delivered to the principal or the principal's designee either by mail or personal delivery. Incidental or minor violations of the policy may be presented and resolved informally.

The complaint form developed to report violations of this policy will include a provision for reporting a threat of suicide by a student. If a threat of suicide is reported, the principal or the principal's designee is authorized to inform the student's parent or guardian of the report unless at the discretion of the school principal or the principal's designee the apparent cause of the threat of suicide is child abuse or other significant harm from a parent or guardian.

(b) Upon receipt of the complaint, the principal or the principal's designee will determine if the complaint alleges a serious violation of this policy. If the principal or the principal's designee determines that the complaint alleges a serious violation, the principal or the principal's designee will undertake a reasonably prompt investigation of the complaint. The investigation will entail the gathering of relevant facts and evidence taking into account the circumstances of the complaint. If the investigation establishes a violation, appropriate disciplinary sanctions may be imposed on the offending student(s). Other measures that are reasonably calculated to prevent a recurrence of the violations(s) may also be imposed by the principal or the school system.

(c) Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any student who has reported a violation of this policy or sought relief provided by this policy are prohibited, and are themselves a violation of this policy. Any confirmed acts of reprisal or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary sanctions that may include any sanction, penalty, or consequence that is available to school officials under the Code of Student Conduct. A student who deliberately, recklessly, and falsely accuses another student of a violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary sanctions as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct.

6.29.5: Promulgation of Policy and Related Procedures, Rules, and Forms

This policy and any procedures, rules and forms developed and approved to implement the policy will be published on the website of each local board of education and school, shall be available at each school office, and shall be included in the student handbook that is distributed to each student at the beginning of each school year.

VII. Instructional Program

7.1 Curriculum

The Superintendent will coordinate the design and development of a comprehensive curriculum plan in accordance with state law and any requirements of the State Department of Education for approval by the Board.

7.2 Textbooks

Textbooks will be purchased and distributed in accordance with State Department of Education regulations. Only textbooks recommended by the local textbook committee will be approved by the Board, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent. The local textbook committee will be appointed by the Board and will consist of twenty (20) members, including parents, teachers, and administrators, who will serve a term of three years. Students are loaned textbooks for the duration of the course that requires the textbook and are responsible for the care of the textbook. Students must reimburse the Board for the cost of any textbooks that are lost or damaged beyond reasonable wear and tear.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-36-62 (1975)]

7.3 Academic Standards

Teachers will assign grades and confer academic credit for work and activities performed by students in accordance with objective and generally accepted instructional and grading standards, applicable laws and regulations, and criteria hereinafter specified.

7.3.1 General Grade Scale – Grades for academic course work will be awarded according to the following scale:

	<u>Numerical Grade</u>	<u>Grade Point Letter</u>
	<u>Average Points</u>	
<u>Grade</u>	<u>(100 point scale)</u>	
	<u>(4 point scale)</u>	
A	90 – 100	4.00
B	80-89	3.00
C	70-79	2.00
D	60-69	1.00
F	Below 60	0.00

7.3.2 Advanced Placement and Honors Grade Scale – Numerical grades in approved Advanced Placement and Honors courses will be weighted in accordance with the guidelines contained in the Dothan City Schools' Progression Guide Plan.

- 7.3.3 Special Education Grading Standards – Students who are receiving special educational services may be graded according to an individualized educational plan, and nothing in Board policy or procedure prohibits the extension of appropriate academic modifications or accommodations to students who may be eligible for such modifications or accommodations under provisions of state and federal law.
- 7.3.4 Report Cards – Report cards reflecting student progress will be provided to the parents or legal guardians of students on a regularly scheduled basis.
- 7.3.5 Promotion and Retention – The process for making decisions about promotion and retention of students should take into consideration a variety of factors including age, maturity, motor coordination, capacity for learning, and academic progress. The decision-making process should involve the principal and teacher(s) with the authority for determining promotion and retention resting entirely with the teacher(s) and principal, except that a kindergarten student may be retained only upon approval/agreement of the parents/guardians. If there is a possibility of a student being retained based on the teacher’s opinion of the student’s academic performance and/or other factors, the parents/guardians of that student should be informed as early in the school year as possible. In all cases, the decision of whether a student should be promoted or retained shall be made on the basis of which grade placement provides the student a better chance of progressing in his/her educational development.
- 7.3.6 Class Rankings – Beginning with the ninth grade of high school, all students will be ranked based on the four-point grade point average scale (GPA) (calculated and weighted as described herein). The GPA calculation will be carried out four decimal places and rounded off.
- 7.3.7 Credit Recovery – The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures for a program through which a student may recover credits in one or more failed courses, in compliance with regulations promulgated by the State Department of Education. The curriculum will align with the State Board of Education course of study and study content standards in which the student seeking credit recovery is deficient.
[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02(12)]
- 7.3.8 Transfer of Credits – Dothan City Schools are accredited by Cognia, the only accreditation organization recognized by the Alabama State Board of Education. Transfer credits from other schools will be accepted from other regionally accredited associations without further validation. However, the procedures for awarding credit to students coming to Dothan High School from a non-accredited

school or home school will follow the Alabama Administrative Code 290-3-102(7)(j)290-3-02(7)(L).

7.4 *Testing*

The Superintendent is authorized to develop and implement a standardized testing program that will include, at a minimum, all testing required under state and federal law. All standardized tests are to be conducted in accordance with the appropriate test administration manual guidelines and any rules or regulations that are intended to ensure their security and validity.

Teachers are authorized to conduct tests for their courses in order to determine their students' abilities, knowledge and skills, and to use in calculating a student's grade.

7.5 *Summer School Operations*

A "summer school" program may be implemented in compliance with regulations promulgated by the State Department of Education. Summer school is provided as a service by the Board and is separate and distinct from the regular academic year. The Superintendent is authorized to develop and maintain rules and regulations for the operation of summer school, including requirements for enrollment, attendance, transportation, and tuition, which will be subject to approval by the Board.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02(6)]

7.6 *Dual Enrollment*

Upon recommendation of the Superintendent, the Board may establish guidelines in accordance with the regulations of the State Department of Education by which qualified high school students are allowed to take post-secondary college courses for high school credit.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02(11)]

7.7 *Correspondence or Online Courses*

Credit for correspondence and online courses will be recognized if the conditions and criteria established by the Alabama Department of Education for such programs are met.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02(12, 13)]

7.8 *Virtual School*

7.8.1. Scope and Delivery of Services – The school system provides a virtual school option to full-time students in grades 7-12 who meet its enrollment

requirements. All courses will align with state standards and will include, at a minimum, all courses that are required to obtain a high school diploma.

The school system also provides virtual coursework to students through a learning management system that aligns with standards and is approved by the Superintendent.

- 7.8.2. Student Eligibility Criteria –All students must meet the school system enrollment requirements. Students must meet the school system enrollment requirements. Students will have to follow all state course requirements and all graduation requirements set in the system’s course description guide.

The school system reserves the right to develop specific eligibility criteria for virtual courses. Students may be transitioned back to a traditional day program if (1) the student’s participation in the virtual program is impeding the student’s academic progress; (2) if the student fails to meet virtual course attendance requirements; or (3) if the student repeatedly violates school system policies, procedures, rules or regulations, including, but not limited to, the school system’s rules governing the use of its technology resources.

- 7.8.3. Monitoring Performance and Testing Requirements – Individual student performance will be monitored pursuant to the school system’s traditional academic credit requirements and grade scale. Students utilizing the virtual school option will be subject to all state testing and accountability requirements and will be subject to the same rules and regulations

regarding the administration of such tests that are applicable to students enrolled in the traditional day program.

The Superintendent is hereby authorized to take whatever action may be necessary to facilitate the state testing and accountability requirements applicable to virtual school students. The school system reserves the right to require students utilizing the virtual school option to participate in state testing and accountability requirements on campus at a date and time selected by the school system.

- 7.8.4. Attendance –Students participating in the virtual school option are required to be active and submitting assignments in order to remain enrolled in the program.

The school system reserves the right to set specific attendance requirements for each virtual course. The Superintendent or his designee is authorized to develop alternate attendance policies for virtual courses, provided that students in such programs are given notice of the attendance requirements. A student’s failure to comply with such requirements may result in

administrative action including, but not limited to, probation or removal from the class or a charge of truancy, if appropriate.

7.8.5. Extracurricular Activities – Students must meet the same extracurricular activity eligibility requirements as students enrolled in the traditional day program, including, but not limited to, any applicable Alabama High School Athletic Association (“AHSAA”) requirements. Student residency for purposes of participating in extracurricular activities will be determined in accordance with applicable state law and AHSAA guidelines.

7.8.6. Additional Procedures Authorized –The Superintendent or his designee is authorized to develop such procedures as he deems necessary to implement this policy including, but not limited to, eligibility criteria for courses, methods for informing students and parents of the virtual school’s requirements and rules, and a process for making determinations regarding a student’s continued eligibility.

[Reference: Ala. Code § 16-46A-1, *et seq.*]

7.9 Career and Technical Education Programs

The Career and Technical Education Program (CTE) consists of areas of study that blend academic, occupational, and life skills. The CTE program will be administered in accordance with the requirements of the Alabama State Department of Education and the board.

7.9.1 Work-Based Learning Experience – A work-based learning experience provides students with educational opportunities in a work setting that typically cannot be obtained in a classroom and may include, but is not limited to, cooperative education, internships, clinical experiences, and other related opportunities. The Superintendent is authorized to develop guidelines and procedures in accordance with the regulations of the Alabama State Department of Education for work based learning experiences to be conducted in the school system, including, but not limited to, guidelines for decision making and protocol for solving problems at the workplace and school.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-6-1-.04]

7.9.2 Live Work – Live work consists of work conducted by students that relates to the knowledge and skills taught as part of a CTE program of study, but is presented from outside the classroom. The Superintendent is authorized to develop for Board approval guidelines and procedures in accordance with the regulations of the Alabama State Department of Education and any applicable Business/Industry Certification requirements for live work to be conducted in the school system, including, but not limited to, a systematic method for managing live work, work requests and orders, and procedures for approval of where and for whom work may

be conducted, school liability, and restrictions on live work. Any money collected for live work will be accounted for in accordance with the Board's Finance Manual.

7.9.3 Safety –To the extent practicable, reasonable safety procedures will be implemented in the Career and Technical Education program in accordance with Alabama State Department of Education regulations and any applicable Business/Industry Certification requirements.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-6-1-.04]

7.10 Foreign Exchange Programs

The Superintendent is authorized to develop guidelines and procedures, to be approved by the Board, under which foreign exchange students may attend Dothan City Schools and Dothan City students may participate in foreign exchange programs.

7.11 *Extended Programs: Community Education*

Upon their approval by the Board, the Superintendent is authorized to implement programs and projects designed to meet the needs of the community served by the school system in accordance with any laws or regulations governing such programs.

[Reference: Ala. Admin. Code 290-8-5-.01]

7.12 *Graduation and Commencement*

In order to obtain an Alabama high school diploma, a student must earn the credits mandated by the applicable Alabama Administrative Code requirements and meet any other requirements mandated by state law or the Alabama State Department of Education.

A student with a disability (as defined by the IDEA) who has met the requirements provided by the Alabama Administrative Code or other applicable law will receive either a diploma or a graduation certificate as appropriate.

A student who has satisfactorily completed one of the above requirements is eligible to participate in graduation ceremonies as a member of the graduating class. Student participation in graduation-related ceremonies will be subject to the principal's approval and payment of outstanding financial obligations. Participation in a graduation-related ceremony may be prohibited by the principal if the student violates disciplinary standards or if, in the judgment of the principal, the student's participation could lead or contribute to disorder or disruption of the ceremony or activity.

7.12.1 Advanced Academic Endorsement – Students who meet the requirement contained in the Dothan City School's Progression Guide Plan will be designated as honor graduates.

7.12.2 Valedictorian/Salutatorian – The Valedictorian and Salutatorian will be selected in accordance with the criteria contained in the applicable Dothan City Schools’ Progression Guide Plan.

7.12.3 Fifth Year Seniors - Upon the recommendation of the counselor and approval of the principal, a student who has completed four full academic years of high school but who has not completed the required course work for graduation will be allowed to attend the number of class periods necessary to complete the courses required for graduation.

7.13 School Wellness

In furtherance of its commitment to fostering healthy nutritional and physical activities that support student achievement and that promote the development of lifelong wellness practices, the Board endorses the following programs, practices, and activities:

7.13.1 Nutrition Education and Promotion – Nutrition education that teaches the knowledge, skills, and values needed to develop healthy eating behaviors and nutrition promotion that promotes and reinforces student health will be integrated into the curriculum and offered throughout school campuses, including school dining areas and classrooms, by appropriately trained personnel.

7.13.2 Nutrition Standards and Guidelines – The Board will ensure that reimbursable school meals meet the program requirements and nutritional standards established by applicable state and federal regulations. The Board will encourage students to make nutritious food choices and will monitor all food and beverages sold or served to students, including those available outside federally regulated child nutrition programs. The Board will consider nutrient density and portion size before permitting food and beverages to be sold or served to students.

7.13.3 Physical Education and Physical Activity Opportunities – The Board will offer physical education opportunities that include the components of a sound physical education program. Physical education will equip students with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to maintain healthful lifelong physical activity. Physical education instruction will be aligned with the curriculum. All students will be provided the opportunity to participate regularly in supervised physical activities that are intended to maintain physical fitness and to impart the benefits of maintaining a physically active and healthy lifestyle.

7.13.4 Other School-Based Activities Designed to Promote Student Wellness – The Board may implement other programs that help create a school environment that conveys consistent wellness messages and that is conducive to healthy eating and physical activity.

7.13.5 Administrative Implementation – The Superintendent is authorized to develop and implement administrative rules and directives that are consistent with this policy and to oversee the implementation and periodic review and update of the wellness policy based on input from teachers (including specialists in health and physical education), school nurses, parents and guardians, students, representatives of the school food service program, school board members, school administrators, and the public .

The Superintendent will report to the Board, as requested, on programs and efforts that are designed to meet the purpose and intent of this policy and will inform and update the public regarding the content and implementation of the wellness program. The Superintendent will ensure each local school’s compliance with the wellness policy and will measure periodically and make available to the public an assessment of the implementation of the wellness policy, including the extent to which schools are in compliance with the policy, the extent to which the policy compares to model policy and to describe the progress made in attaining the goals of the policy.

7.14 *Selection of Instructional Materials and Materials for the School Libraries*

The Superintendent is authorized to develop criteria for approval by the Board for selection of materials (other than textbooks) that are used in conjunction with student instruction and for circulation in school libraries. The Superintendent is further authorized to develop a procedure for review of objections to instructional and library materials.

7.15 *Parental and Family Engagement*

In order to comply with the requirements of section 1116 of Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”), the Board will comply with the following requirements:

7.15.1 Joint Development of Required Plans –The school system will involve parents and family members in jointly developing the Board’s Title I, Part A plan, and the development of school support and improvement plans as required by the ESSA.

7.15.2 Coordination of Activities within the School System –The school system will provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist and build the capacity of all participating schools within the school system in planning and implementing effective parent and family involvement activities designed to improve student academic achievement and school performance. Such coordination may include meaningful consultation with employers, business leaders, and philanthropic organizations, or individuals with expertise in effectively engaging parents and family members in education.

7.15.3 Coordination with other Laws and Programs – The school system will coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement strategies to the extent feasible and appropriate, with other relevant Federal, State, and local laws and programs.

7.15.4 Annual Evaluation – The school system will conduct, with the meaningful involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent and family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of all schools served under this part, including identifying—

- a. Barriers to greater participation by parents/families in activities authorized by this section (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background);
- b. The needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers; and
- c. Strategies to support successful school and family interactions.

The school system will use the findings of the annual evaluation to design evidencebased strategies for more effective parental and family engagement, and to revise, if necessary, the parent and family engagement policies described in this section.

7.15.5 Involvement of Parents/Family Members – The school system will involve parents in the activities of the schools, which may include establishing a parent advisory board comprised of a sufficient number and representative group of parents or family members served by the school system to adequately represent the needs of the population. This advisory board will help develop, revise, and review the parent and family engagement policy.

[Reference: 20 U.S.C.A. § 6318(a)(2)]