

DORCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT FOUR

Personnel Handbook

2026 – 2027



“Empowering Minds, Shaping Futures”

600 Minus Street • St. George, SC 29477 | www.dorchester4.k12.sc.us

Table of Contents

About Your Handbook	
Disclaimer	page 3
Nondiscrimination Statement	page 3
Mission, Vision and Beliefs	
Our Mission	page 3
Our Vision	page 3
Our Beliefs	page 3
Our Motto	page 4
Our Community	page 4
Equal Opportunity Employment	page 4
Americans with Disabilities Act	page 4
Board of Trustees	pages 4-5
Directory - Administrative Offices	pages 5-7
Schools and Programs	pages 7-8
District Personnel Policies	
Policy GBEB - Staff Conduct	page 8
Policy GBEB - Staff Dress Code	page 8
Policy GBEEA - Social Media	page 9
Personnel Policies - Certified / Professional Employees	
Licenses and Certifications	page 9
Certificate Upgrades and Adding Areas of Certification	page 10
Computing Experience for Teachers	page 10
Initial and Critical Needs Certificates	page 10
Certified Personnel Extra Duty	pages 10-11
Tutoring	page 11
Types of SC Professional Teaching Contracts	pages 11-12
Personnel Policies - Support Staff / Classified Employees	
Definitions	page 12
Job Descriptions	page 12
Salary Scales	page 12
Work Agreements	page 12
Benefits Overview	
Deferred Compensation	page 13
Insurance Information	page 13
Retirement	pages 13-14
COBRA	page 14
Staff Leave and Absences	
Professional Staff Leave and Absences	pages 14-15
Sick Leave Bank	page 15
Resignations and Retirements / End-of-Year Notice	page 15
SC State Transfer	pages 15-16
Facilities and Operations	
Emergency Closings and Drills	page 16
Weather Conditions	pages 16-17
Technology Use	
Technology Support	page 17
Cybersecurity and Account Security	pages 17-18
Acceptable Use and Internet Access	page 18
Employee Onboarding and Separation	page 18
Technology Department Contacts	page 19
Field Trip Procedures (Day and Overnight)	pages 19-20
Substitutes	page 20
In-House Transfer Request Procedures	page 20
Teaching and Learning/Instructional Expectations	page 21
Finance and Payroll	
Cash Handling Procedures	pages 21-22
Payroll	page 22
Salary Information	page 22
Employee Handbook Overview	page 23

About Your Handbook

Disclaimer

Nothing in this 2026-2027 Employee Handbook or in any policy manual of Dorchester School District Four (DD4) constitutes or creates an express or implied contract of employment. Rather, this handbook should be understood as a brief description of the benefits offered by DD4 and an overview of its policies and procedures. This handbook supersedes all previous handbooks or other documents that address the same subject matter as the policies and procedures contained in this handbook. In addition, this handbook can be modified or altered at any time by DD4. Complete information on DD4's administrative rules is available online at dorchester4.k12.sc.us.

This handbook is advisory in nature, creates no contractual obligations on the part of Dorchester School District Four or its employees, and does not alter the at-will relationship of nonexempt employees, who are free to resign at any time for any reason. Dorchester School District Four has the same right to end the employment relationship (see Policy GDB in Section G — Personnel). No statement by an employee, officer, or agent of Dorchester School District Four contrary to this paragraph shall have any force or effect unless it is in writing and signed by the Chief Human Resources Officer.

Nondiscrimination Statement

DD4 is committed to nondiscrimination and equal opportunity for all students, parents/legal guardians, staff, visitors, applicants for admission and employment, personnel, and community members who participate or seek to participate in its educational programs or activities. Accordingly, DD4 does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, sex, pregnancy, childbirth, or any related medical conditions, color, physical or mental disability, age (40 or older), ancestry, genetic information, national origin, or any other applicable status protected by Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, or any other local, state, or federal law.

Chief Human Resource Officer: Dr. April Sanders asanders@dd4.k12.sc.us

Mission, Vision and Beliefs

Mission Statement

The mission of Dorchester School District Four is to develop life-long learners who will have a positive impact on our global world.

Our Vision

The vision of Dorchester School District Four is to be an exemplary district where all students reach their maximum potential with the support of the district, home, and community.

Our Beliefs

We believe that students learn when the district, parents, and community support the education process and are committed to continuous improvement; effective instruction is provided by highly qualified teachers; and a nurturing and secure learning environment is maintained.

Our Motto

“Empowering Minds, Shaping Futures”

Our Community

Dorchester School District Four is home to six thriving schools with a population of approximately 2,200 students, situated among the oaks with a flair of rich Lowcountry cuisine, hospitality, and family-oriented lifestyles. Conveniently located off I-95 with easy access to I-26, the district is easily connected for travel needs. Historic Charleston, SC, and the scenic beaches of Hilton Head Island and Myrtle Beach are all minutes away and make for great vacation and weekend getaway locations. To the west of Dorchester County are Orangeburg and Columbia.

Dorchester District Four is rich in cultural diversity, technology, innovative programs, and opportunities for advancement. Several state and private colleges and universities are within an hour's drive, offering the educational benefits of city life without the hustle and bustle.

The county seat is St. George, “the town of friendly people.”

Equal Opportunity Employment

Dorchester School District Four is an equal opportunity employer. The District makes employment decisions on the basis of individual merit and without discrimination because of race, religion, color, disability, sex, age, alienage, or national origin in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. Specifically, the District pursues equal employment opportunity in the following areas: recruitment; selection and hiring; transfer and promotion; demotions, terminations, layoffs, and recalls; compensation; working conditions; benefits and privileges of employment; and training.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act (as amended) provides that no otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States shall, solely by reason of this handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. This applies to areas covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Any employee who has a disability that may require accommodations should notify their immediate supervisor.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is the governing body responsible for establishing policies, setting direction, and providing support for quality educational opportunities for all students served by Dorchester School District Four. The Board recognizes that public support and open lines of communication are vital to a successful educational environment for students and employees.

The Board holds regular monthly meetings on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Room located at 600 Minus Street, St. George, South Carolina 29477. If a different location or time is used, the change will be publicized. All Board meetings are open to the public.

Phyllis Hughes — Board Chair

Phone: 843-563-2298 | Email: phughes@dd4.k12.sc.us

Tony Folk — Vice Chair

Phone: 843-563-3507 | Email: tfolk@dd4.k12.sc.us

Dr. James Hodges — Secretary

Phone: 843-563-9057 | Email: jhodges@dd4.k12.sc.us

Jenny Infinger — Trustee

Phone: 843-200-7949 | Email: vinfinger@dd4.k12.sc.us

Evelyn Infinger — Trustee

Phone: 843-462-7767 | Email: einfinger@dd4.k12.sc.us

Stacy Smoak — Board Secretary

Phone: 843-563-4535 | Email: ssmoak@dd4.k12.sc.us

District Directory — Administrative Offices

Office of the Superintendent

Superintendent: **Jeffrey Beckwith**

Executive Assistant & Board Secretary: **Stacy Smoak**

600 Minus Street, St. George, SC 29477 | P: 843-563-4535 | F: 843-563-9269

Operations

Chief Operating Officer: **James Martin**

Administrative Assistant: **Lorraine Coates**

General Maintenance: **Elyze Harrison**

Plumbing Technician: **Felix Ashe**

Master Electrician: **James Lowry**

HVAC Technician: **George Crozier**

600 Minus Street, St. George, SC 29477 | P: 843-563-4535 | F: 843-563-9269

Child Nutrition Services

Director of Child Nutrition Services: **Kevin Earle**

Administrative Assistant: **Lisa Kelly**

600 Minus Street, St. George, SC 29477 | P: 843-563-5906 | F: 843-636-3315

Transportation

Director of Transportation: **Karim Johnson**

Administrative Assistant: **Sandra Felder**

AM Dispatcher: **Harold Nix**

PM Dispatcher: **Drucilla Brand**

600 Minus Street, St. George, SC 29477 | P: 843-636-5001 | F: 843-563-4028

Technology

Director of Technology: **Elijah DeLee**

Inventory Control Specialist: **Charlotte Callaway**

Instructional Technology Coach: **Andreana Allen**

Technician: **Jeff Dantzler**

Technician: **Brantley Dantzler**

Technician: **Daryl Erwin**

Technician: **Noah Huber**

288 South Metts Street, St. George, SC 29477 | P: 843-563-5906 | F: 843-563-4028

The Office of Human Resources

Chief Human Resources Officer: **Dr. April Sanders**

Director of Public Relations: **Kevin Lakin**

Benefits Administrator / HR Specialist: **Angela Crosby**

Administrative Assistant: **Jelisa Addison**

600 Minus Street, St. George, SC 29477 | P: 843-563-4535 | F: 843-636-3838

Finance

Chief Financial Officer: **Penny Hutto**

Senior Accountant: **Anna Cribb**

Special Revenue Accountant: **Tiffany Strong-Moorer**

Payroll Manager: **Elizabeth Stroble**

Accounts Payable Manager: **Mirela Lazescu**

Administrative Assistant: **Yulonda Rivers**

500 Ridge Street, St. George, SC 29477 | P: 843-563-4535 | F: 843-563-9269

Student Services

Director: **Dr. Nancy Britt-Stevens**

Student Services Coordinator: **Nicole Bryant**

District Social Worker: **Anntoinette Haynes**

MLP Teacher: **Margarita Baptista**

600 Minus Street, St. George, SC 29477 | P: 843-638-3920 | F: 843-563-5936

Assessment & Accountability

Director: **Shelissa Bowman**

PowerSchool Coordinator: **Elixzina Breadmon**

600 Minus Street, St. George, SC 29477 | P: 843-638-3920 | F: 843-563-9269

The Office of Teaching and Learning

Chief Academic Officer: **Michael White**

Coordinator of Instructional Strategy and Professional Learning: **Valarie Jamison**

Administrative Assistant: **Valerie Gaines**

600 Minus Street, St. George, SC 29477 | P: 843-638-3920 | F: 843-563-9269

Federal Programs

Director: **Dr. Tracy Jackson**

Parent/Family Engagement Coordinator: **Chaquilla Green**

Finance Specialist: **Eula Riley**

190 South Metts Street, St. George, SC 29477 | P: 843-563-5923 | F: 843-636-3411

Athletics

Director: **Tydlles Sibert**

Assistant Director: **Wylie McCall**

4128 Highway 78, Dorchester, SC 29437 | P: 843-563-5956 | F: 843-563-5997

Exceptional Children

Director: **Monica Tudder**

Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper: **Nickie King**

Medicaid/Enrich Data Entry Specialist: **Theresa Linder**

Elementary Coordinator: **Calundra Lighty**

Secondary Coordinator: **Julia Drum**

Transition Specialist: **Dr. Robyn Mixon-Davis**

Behavior Interventionist: **Linda Doss**

Psychologist II: **Dr. Andrew Preston**

Psychologist II: **Allison Belcher**

Psychologist II: **Allison Gibbons**

Occupational Therapist: **Brittany Wamer**

Physical Therapist: **Priscilla Nugent**

1650 East Main Street, Dorchester, SC 29437 | P: 843-636-5022 | F: 843-636-3623

Schools and Programs

Secondary Schools & Programs

Woodland High School

Principal: **Robert Benvin**

Assistant Principal: **Royce Charpia Jr.**

Assistant Principal: **Dr. Precious Jemison**

4128 Highway 78, Dorchester, SC 29437 | 843-563-5956

Woodland Middle School

Principal: **Benjamin Kennedy**

Assistant Principal: **Latorsha Bryant**

Assistant Principal: **Markayla Busby**

4044 Highway 78, Dorchester, SC 29437 | 843-563-3171

Odyssey Educational Center

Principal: **Dr. Jeffery Thompson**

145 Hill Street, Harleyville, SC 29448 | 843-462-2270

Elementary Schools

Clay Hill Elementary School

Principal: **Alisa Lemon**

Assistant Principal: **Kimberly Hartzog**

387 S. Railroad Ave., Ridgeville, SC 29472 | 843-851-7386

Harleyville Elementary School

Principal: **Jeremy Wolfgang**

Assistant Principal: **DeVane Trigiani**

1650 E. Main Street, Dorchester, SC 29437 | 843-462-7671

Williams Memorial Elementary School

Principal: **Dr. Prince Brewington**

Assistant Principal: **Adrian Busch**

290 S. Metts Street, St. George, SC 29477 | 843-563-3231

District Personnel Policies

A link to the District Policy Manual can be found on the district website. To review policies specific to personnel, refer to Section G — [Personnel](#). While all policies in Section G are important, the following have been identified as essential for personnel and should be reviewed carefully.

Policy GBEB — Staff Conduct

All district staff members, including employees, contractors, volunteers, student teachers, and interns, are expected to maintain the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, and ethical conduct. Staff members must follow district policies, demonstrate sound judgment, and serve as positive role models both on and off duty when their conduct affects their professional responsibilities or the educational environment. When interacting with students, staff must maintain appropriate professional boundaries and foster relationships based on cooperation, mutual respect, understanding, and trust. Staff are prohibited from engaging in criminal activity, substance abuse, violence, harassment, discrimination, inappropriate sexual conduct, or other behavior that could harm students, coworkers, or the reputation of the district. Staff members must fulfill their professional responsibilities by following supervisory directions, maintaining appropriate student supervision and discipline, adhering to safety requirements, protecting confidential student information, and properly implementing required educational plans. Personal activities, including electronic communication and social media use, generally remain private unless they interfere with job performance, disrupt the educational environment, or violate law or district policy. Staff members are expected to promptly report suspected policy violations to a supervisor and seek guidance when they are uncertain whether specific conduct may violate district expectations. Violations may result in disciplinary action, including suspension or termination, and staff members must report any arrests to their supervisor within two business days.

[Policy GBEB - Staff Conduct](#)

Policy GBEB — Staff Dress Code

The Superintendent will ensure that a uniform faculty and staff dress standard is maintained throughout the district. As role models for impressionable young people, it is imperative that faculty and staff be professionally dressed at all times, in keeping with the dignity and responsibility of their respective positions. Professional faculty and staff members will be neat, clean, and appropriately dressed for the occasion. The principal of each school may allow for modification of dress as special circumstances occur. In addition, styles may be modified as approved by the principal for special assignments — for example, ties may or may not be appropriate for all teaching areas, and hats and jeans may be appropriate only for field trips, field days, and similar events (Policy GBEB, Staff Dress Code).

[Policy GBEBB - Staff Dress Code](#)

Policy GBEEA — Social Media

The district recognizes social media as a valuable communication and educational tool, but staff members are expected to use it responsibly, professionally, and in compliance with district policies and applicable laws. Staff are held to the same professional standards on social media as they are in any other public setting and should ensure their online content reflects positively on their role as educators and public employees. Educational social media accounts should be used only for approved instructional, extracurricular, athletic, or district-related purposes and should be closely monitored for appropriate content. Staff should provide parents and legal guardians with information about educational social media platforms while ensuring essential information is available through alternative formats. Staff members must protect student and staff privacy by obtaining appropriate permission before sharing photographs, videos, or other identifying information and by avoiding the disclosure of confidential information. Direct communication with students through private messages should be limited to district-approved educational purposes, with parents or legal guardians included whenever possible. Staff should maintain professional boundaries by avoiding personal social media relationships with students and limiting social media interactions with students' parents or legal guardians. Staff should understand that social media content may have no expectation of privacy, may be considered a public record, and may result in disciplinary action if it violates district policy, professional expectations, or applicable law.

[Policy GBEEA - Social Media](#)

Personnel Policies — Certified / Professional Employees

Licenses and Certifications

All certified employees must maintain valid teaching certificates from the State Department of Education. Certificates must be on file in the Office of Human Resources prior to the first day of the contract period.

A Professional Certificate is valid for five years, with validity dates listed at the top of the certificate. It is important to know your certificate number, as it is required on all renewal credit documentation — write it down and keep it in an accessible place. Educators holding a Professional Certificate, typically valid for five school years, must earn 120 renewal credits during the certificate period to maintain and renew their certification.

During the validity period, certified employees are required to earn 120 renewal credits (see the [Renewal Credit Matrix](#)). Sixty points (3 credit hours) must be earned by completing a graduate-level course if the employee does not hold a master's degree. Credits can only be earned during the five-year validity period on the certificate.

All documentation for renewal credit must be sent to Jelisa Addison in the Office of Human Resources. Credits for college courses must be documented by an official transcript in its original, sealed envelope. Employers are encouraged to maintain a personal copy of all documents and hours sent over to the Office of Human Resources.

The Office of Human Resources will renew the Professional Certificate, and the State Department of Education will post the renewed certificate in the Educator Portal, where educators may download and/or print copies. Effective July 1, 2009, the State Department of Education no longer prints official certificates except for an individual's very first certificate; official copies may be requested thereafter for a fee. A Request for Change/Action form must be sent to the State Department any time an employee has a name or address change.

Certificate Upgrades and Adding Areas of Certification

An employee's salary is based on the teaching credential on file. When an employee has earned a higher-level credential, they must request and receive a new credential from the State Department of Education and forward it to the Office of Human Resources before a salary adjustment can be made. It is the responsibility of each certified employee to ensure that the Office of Human Resources always has a copy of their current teaching certificate, and to keep the Personnel Office updated with changes in name, address, or certification.

All documentation for class upgrades (Master's, Master's+30, Doctorate) and adding certification areas must be sent to the State Department in Columbia, accompanied by a Request for Change/Action form. The updated certificate can be downloaded or printed from the Educator Portal.

If upgrading class during a renewal year and using courses on the transcript for renewal, an official transcript must be sent to the State Department of Education.

Class changes result in a pay raise. Employees must monitor the State Department of Education website and notify DD4's Personnel Office when the change becomes effective. Failure to notify Personnel regarding class changes may result in the forfeiture or delay of salary upgrades.

It is recommended that employees keep a Certificate Renewal Folder with these instructions and a record of every professional development opportunity or workshop attended — it will be extremely valuable at renewal time.

Computing Experience for Teachers

- One year of experience: employment in a full-time position for at least 152 compensated days.
- One-half year of experience: employment in a regular teaching position for at least 95 days of full-time employment.
- Summer school teaching experience may count toward the 152-day requirement at a rate of two summer school days per regular school day, not to exceed twenty regular school days in any year; summer school days are added to the accrued teaching days of the preceding school year.
- Two half-years of experience may be combined to give one full year of experience.
- No more than one year of experience may be earned during any twelve-month period.

Initial and Critical Needs Certificates

First-year teachers or out-of-state teachers with fewer than three years of experience are issued an Initial Certificate from the South Carolina State Department of Education. Teachers who applied for certification through a Program of Alternative Certification for Educators are issued a Critical Needs Certificate. These certificates are not renewed using coursework or the district's renewal credit plan. Once an employee has successfully completed their formal evaluation and passed the appropriate PRAXIS exam, they will be issued a Professional Certificate.

Certified Personnel Extra Duty

The Board expects teachers to assume reasonable duties over and above their regular teaching responsibilities in order to provide students with the most comprehensive program possible. These extra duties may include daily class preparation and attendance at staff meetings. Professional staff members will assist in the supervision of students as part of their regular duties during the school day, including but not limited to bus, lunchroom, and hall duty. The Board expects all teachers to attend functions at their respective schools and, when requested, to assist the principal or director, as well as to attend appropriate parent-teacher meetings. The Board may consider

activities and services that place major demands on a teacher's extra time as an extra duty assignment, compensated in accordance with the Board's supplementary pay schedule, which is considered annually by the Board (Policy GCMD, Instructional Staff Extra Duty).

Tutoring

A teacher may enter into an agreement with parents for tutoring children for a fee. This practice must be limited to children other than those for whom the teacher currently has teaching, administrative, or supervisory responsibility. These restrictions ensure all students receive reasonable assistance without charge from their own teachers and avoid placing a teacher in a position of conflict of interest. A teacher may not tutor any student for pay during regular working hours or on school premises (Policy GCRD, Tutoring for Pay).

Types of South Carolina Professional Teaching Contracts

Per S.C. Code §59-26-40 (Induction; Annual; Continuing; persons trained outside state; teachers certified under trades and industrial education certification process):

Induction- Formative

An induction contract is issued to first-year teachers, teachers with experience only in private schools in South Carolina, and possibly teachers with experience outside the state. During this contract period, the teacher participates in a formal, year-long induction program. A teacher may be employed as an induction teacher for no more than three years.

Induction Year 2 and Induction Year 3

Issued to educators who need additional assistance following an Induction Year 1 contract, or who have more than one year of teaching experience and need more time for orientation to the district and/or the ADEPT evaluation process.

Annual- Formative

Issued to teachers who have successfully performed at the level required by the induction contract, or who have one or more years of public school experience outside South Carolina. Annual contract teachers must be evaluated using an evaluation instrument that meets criteria established by the State Board of Education. Generally, a teacher may be employed for a maximum of three years under an annual contract, with one additional year available after a two-year suspension and completion of a required remediation program (available only once).

Annual- Summative

Issued to teachers who have completed an induction contract year, or teachers who were under formal evaluation but did not meet all established criteria for success. These teachers receive assistance and are evaluated by Individualized Assistance Plans.

Continuing

Issued to teachers who have successfully completed the evaluation for annual contract teachers and fulfilled all requirements for a professional teaching certificate. Continuing contract teachers are evaluated continuously (i.e., every year), either formally or informally (goals-based), at the district's discretion. Teachers receiving a continuing contract have full procedural rights currently existing under the law relating to employment and dismissal.

At-Will Employees

Non-certified and retired employees may be employed on an at-will basis through a Letter of Agreement or Work Assurance. Employment on an at-will basis means the employee is free to leave whenever they wish, and the district is free to dismiss an at-will employee at any time, so long as the reason, if any, is not legally impermissible. In May of each year, the district will issue Letters of Intent to non-certified employees recommended for employment in the subsequent year.

Alternative Certification Programs

Teachers pursuing certification through an alternative certification program are employed, assisted, and evaluated following the same sequence required for regular teachers.

Personnel Policies — Support Staff / Classified Employees

Definitions

Employees who are not required to hold a state certificate are called classified, in the sense that they are not certificated by the State Department of Education. They may be skilled, highly trained, and members of other professions. Non-certificated personnel of the district include secretaries, clerks, bookkeepers, cafeteria workers, public nurses, custodians, non-student bus drivers, and others.

Job Descriptions

The Superintendent or designee is responsible for writing and maintaining job descriptions covering qualifications, essential duties, and other details pertaining to all classified positions in the school system.

Salary Scales

The Board sets the salary of all support staff on the recommendation of the Superintendent, based on the responsibility of the position, services rendered, the district's operational budget, and applicable state and federal laws. The effective date for all salary changes is July 1.

Work Agreements

The district issues Work Assurances/Agreements. The district considers such staff to be at-will.

Benefits Overview

Deferred Compensation

The South Carolina Deferred Compensation Program (SCDCP) offers 401(k) and 457 savings plans, both with a Roth option. These voluntary retirement savings plans can help supplement an employee's Retirement Systems pension or State ORP savings, and employees may participate in both. There is no employer contribution for any voluntary retirement savings plan; employees decide how much to have deducted automatically from pay and where to invest funds among the mutual funds and other investment products offered. Investment earnings on tax-deferred savings grow tax-deferred, and no taxes are owed until funds are withdrawn from the plans. With the Roth option, employees can make after-tax contributions today and generally take tax-free withdrawals at retirement. Employees should check with their payroll office to confirm availability. For more information about the SCDCP, contact an administrator, at 877-457-6263, or visit the [SCDCP website](#).

Insurance Information

Active employees covered by the Public Employee Benefit Authority (PEBA) Insurance Benefits can manage their benefits through MyBenefits, a convenient online tool. The [Insurance Benefits Guide](#) contains an abbreviated description of insurance benefits provided by or through PEBA.

Open Enrollment

PEBA Insurance [Open Enrollment](#) runs October 1–31, 2026. Employees may view the Insurance Advantage and/or MyBenefits Program online through PEBA, make changes through MyBenefits, or check with their benefits administrator to schedule an appointment. All changes elected during October Open Enrollment become effective January 1, 2027.

Supplemental Insurance

Dorchester District Four has partnered with Pierce Group benefits to provide all eligible employees with access to optional pre-tax and post-supplemental benefits through Colonial Life. Be sure to review the DD4 Supplemental Benefits Microsite (*link below*), which provides easy, year-round access to benefit information, live chat support, benefit explainer videos, plan certificates and documents, and carrier contacts and forms. Annual open enrollment for these benefits will be available each Spring.

[Pierce Group / Supplemental Benefits](#)

Retirement

South Carolina Retirement System (SCRS)

SCRS is a defined benefit retirement plan for employees of state agencies, public and charter school districts, public higher education institutions, and other local subdivisions of government that have joined SCRS.

South Carolina Optional Retirement Program (State ORP)

The State ORP is a defined contribution retirement plan for employees of state agencies, public and charter school districts, and public higher education institutions.

Full Service Retirement

Within 30 days of an employee's date of full service retirement, eligibility must be reviewed and required documentation completed. Contact:

- South Carolina PEBA Retirement Customer Service — website or 888-260-9430
- Dorchester School District Four Benefits Department — 843-563-4535

COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985)

[COBRA](#) requires that continuation of group insurance coverage be offered to covered persons who lose health, dental, or vision coverage due to a qualifying event as defined in the act. Once official notification of an employment change has been processed, a COBRA health care packet will be mailed to the employee's home address on file with DD4's Human Resources Department. Employees should refer to the PEBA Insurance Benefits Guide, section/page 25 "When Coverage Ends," available at www.peba.sc.gov, or by calling PEBA Insurance Customer Service toll-free at 888-260-9430 (press 1 for insurance, then 7 for customer service).

COBRA is usually necessary only for individuals not continuing on with other employment, not securing full service retirement, or who may have a lapse in employment.

Staff Leave and Absences

Professional Staff Leaves and Absences

The District recognizes that regular staff attendance is essential to maintaining continuity of instruction and supporting student success. While employees are expected to report to work as scheduled, certain absences and leaves may be necessary and are permitted in accordance with District policy and applicable law.

- Sick Leave: Eligible full-time employees accrue paid sick leave based on their assigned work schedule and may use sick leave for personal illness. Employees may accrue up to 90 days of sick leave, subject to District policy.
- Personal Leave: Employees may use up to three days of accrued sick leave for personal leave each fiscal year, subject to applicable restrictions and approval requirements.
- Employees are eligible to accrue one (1) day of annual leave per month, for a total of twelve (12) days per year. This benefit applies to all eligible employees.
- Bereavement Leave: Employees may use accrued sick leave for bereavement involving immediate or extended family members, as outlined in District policy.
- Legal and Military Leave: Leave may be available for jury duty, qualifying court appearances, military service, and related obligations in accordance with applicable law and District policy.
- Professional Leave: Employees may request leave to attend approved conferences, workshops, training, or other professional development activities that support their professional growth and the District's instructional programs.
- FMLA and Other Protected Leave: Eligible employees may qualify for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and other applicable federal or state laws.

- **Extended/Education Leave:** Qualified employees may be eligible for education improvement or sabbatical leave, subject to District requirements and approval.

Employees must provide timely notice, complete the required leave application, and follow all established procedures for requesting and documenting an absence. Failure to obtain approval, provide required documentation, or return to work at the conclusion of authorized leave may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Employees should contact the Personnel Department for specific eligibility requirements, application procedures, and questions regarding leave.

Professional Staff: [Policy GCC/GCC-R](#)

Support Staff: [Policy GDC/GDC-R](#)

FMLA

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal law that provides up to 12 work weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a year's time frame for qualified employees. It requires that group health benefits be maintained at the employee's expense during the leave. Employees should read the detailed [FMLA FAQ](#) to learn more.

Sick Leave Bank

Policy GCCAAA — Dorchester School District Four's Sick Leave Bank provides eligible employees with access to additional paid leave during a catastrophic illness, injury, quarantine, or incapacitation. Participation is voluntary, and employees must enroll annually and contribute one sick leave day during the designated enrollment period. The Sick Leave Bank is administered by a Board that reviews applications, makes decisions, and handles appeals according to District policy and applicable laws. To receive benefits, an employee generally must be a current Bank member, have a qualifying medical condition, be absent for at least 20 consecutive or cumulative workdays, and exhaust all other available leave. Employees must also apply for FMLA when eligible and provide required medical documentation from a physician. Approved employees may receive up to 90 Sick Leave Bank days for a catastrophic event, with a lifetime maximum of 90 days through the District. The program operates on a July 1–June 30 year, and employees receiving disability or workers' compensation benefits may be subject to restrictions or termination from Sick Leave Bank benefits.

[Policy GCCAAA- Sick Leave Donation Program](#)

Resignations and Retirements / End-of-Year Notice

Employees must always notify their supervisor in writing if resigning, retiring, or transferring employment to another South Carolina school district or state agency. The supervisor will submit the notification along with a Personnel Action Form to the Human Resources Department to process the official request.

Resignation

Employees should submit a letter of resignation or retirement to their supervisor declaring intent to resign or retire. An employee's benefits end the first of the month following the last date of employment.

South Carolina State Transfer

An employee transferring to another school district or state agency within South Carolina must notify Human Resources in writing as soon as possible. For insurance coverage to continue through the summer months under

the South Carolina state plan, the employee must submit a copy of a contract or letter of agreement from the prospective South Carolina state employer to the DD4 Benefits Department. Insurance coverage with the new employer begins with the onset of the new contract year. Without proof of transfer to a new district or state agency within South Carolina, an employee will have a break in health coverage due to loss of insurance.

Facilities and Operations

Dorchester School District Four is committed to providing a safe learning and working environment for students and staff through intervention and prevention programs. This is accomplished through effective training, community partnerships, effective security measures, and situational guidance during critical incidents.

Emergency Closings

Each school in the district has an emergency preparedness plan developed in cooperation with local law enforcement and other emergency response agencies. The principal is responsible for implementing the plan at their school.

Emergency and Safety Drills

- R43-166 — Student and school safety, emergency and disaster plans
- DD4 Crisis Plan
- Lockdown Drill Report
- School Fire Drill Form

Fire Drills

Schools conduct fire drills at least once a month without notice. Staff will fully cooperate to carry out this legal requirement and will train students in prompt and orderly evacuation.

Tornado and Other Crisis Drills

The district maintains an Emergency Response Plan for any crisis that may threaten the school community. Each school conducts emergency drills each year to educate students and staff in responding to a potential threat to safety.

Weather Conditions

Weather is unpredictable and uncontrollable, and it is impossible to plan in advance for hurricanes, tornadoes, or winter storms. When adverse weather conditions threaten, DD4 officials closely monitor conditions, drawing on information from the National Weather Service, the South Carolina Highway Patrol, and local law enforcement regarding road conditions. Roads throughout the district are also checked for safety by district officials.

The decision to close schools in DD4 is made by the Superintendent based on safety factors within the district; conditions warranting closure in one district may not exist or be as severe in another. DD4 schools operate on schedule whenever it is safe to do so.

Circumstances that might warrant closing schools or delaying classes include:

- Hazardous driving conditions

- Loss of electric power in the schools
- Loss of water service to the schools

Students and parents are encouraged to watch Charleston-area television news broadcasts or listen to Charleston-area radio news reports for information on school closings. Announcements are released to local media as soon as a decision has been made, generally beginning no later than 6:15 a.m. Announcements will be carried on the following stations:

- Television: WCSC Channel 5 (Charleston), WCBF Channel 2 (Charleston), WCIV Channel 4 (Charleston), WTAT-TV/DT Fox 24 (Charleston)
- Radio: WGCD, WRHI

Should severe weather occur during the school day, conditions may or may not necessitate closing schools; if schools close early, announcements will be broadcast on radio and television. All schools have written emergency procedures and plans and conduct teacher training and drills to ensure a safe response during emergencies. In DD4, the safety and well-being of students is always the district's prime concern.

Making up days lost to bad weather is governed by state law, which regulates the required number of school days. When days must be made up, the district makes every effort to notify students and parents of calendar adjustments well in advance.

Technology Use

1. Technology Support

The Technology Department supports district technology systems, including computers, Chromebooks, networks, internet access, software, classroom technology, telecommunications, and security systems.

Requesting Assistance

Submit technology requests through the district-approved help desk process.

Help Desk: helpdesk@dd4.k12.sc.us

Technology Support: technicians@dd4.k12.sc.us

When submitting a request, include:

- Your name and school/department
- Room or location
- Device or asset number, if available
- Description of the issue
- Error messages or screenshots
- Impact on instruction or operations

Urgent issues affecting an entire school, network connectivity, cybersecurity, emergency communication, or major operational systems should be reported immediately.

2. Cybersecurity and Account Security

Every employee is responsible for protecting district systems and information.

Employees Must:

- Keep passwords confidential.
- Never share account credentials.
- Use strong passwords and follow district password requirements.
- Complete required Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA).
- Lock computers when unattended.
- Report suspicious emails, phishing attempts, and unusual account activity.
- Protect student, employee, and confidential district information.

Report Immediately:

- Suspected malware or ransomware
- Lost or stolen devices
- Unauthorized account access
- Suspicious login notifications
- Potential data exposure
- Phishing attacks

3. Acceptable Use and Internet Access

District technology is provided for educational, administrative, and operational purposes. Users may not:

- Access illegal, inappropriate, or malicious content.
- Attempt to bypass web filtering.
- Use unauthorized proxy or circumvention services.
- Install unauthorized software.
- Share passwords.
- Attempt unauthorized access to systems.
- Use district resources for unlawful or inappropriate activities.

4. Employee Onboarding and Separation

New Employees

Technology setup may include:

- District account and email
- Computer or Chromebook
- Software access
- Network access
- MFA enrollment
- Equipment documentation

Transfers and Separations

Employees must:

- Return district-issued equipment when requested.
- Return accessories, docking stations, chargers, and other assigned items.
- Notify Technology of equipment changes.
- Ensure device assignments are updated in FMX.

Technology Department Contacts

Help Desk: helpdesk@dd4.k12.sc.us

Technology Support: technicians@dd4.k12.sc.us

Director of Technology: Elijah DeLee

Phone: 843-563-5906

When in Doubt: Contact the Technology Department before installing software, accessing questionable websites, transferring equipment, or sharing district information.

[Technology Handbook 2.0](#)

Field Trip Procedures (Day and Overnight)

Field trips are designed to enhance the educational experiences of students and should have a direct relationship to the instructional program. All field trips must be approved by the Superintendent.

REMINDERS:

- Field Trip Requests must be submitted **45 days prior** to the scheduled trip.
- Field Trip Requests for Out-of-State or Overnight trips must be submitted **60 days prior** to the scheduled trip as this requires Board approval.
- If the field trip is overnight or out-of-state, a Professional Leave Request Form must be completed and attached with the Field Trip Request Form.
- School Buses are available during the hours of 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM.
- State school buses cannot be used for overnight trips.
- All Schools will be required to reimburse DD4 for the use of the Activity/School Buses and Drivers.
- No fees or reservations should be made, information and/or permission slips should not be sent home without prior approval by the Superintendent.
- **If your field trip form is incomplete or requested documentation is not attached, this will delay your request.**

CHECKLIST FOR REQUESTOR:

- Field Trip Request Form
- All signatures and dates obtained (Teacher, Nurse, Bookkeeper, and Principal)
- Permission Slip - top portion should be completed to reflect how it will be sent home to parents
- Flyer verifying event
- Agenda/Itinerary
- Printout from Google Maps (map with detailed directions of trip)
- List of potential students attending field trip (if sign-ups are requested, please submit a list of all students for that grade level)
- Field Trip Cost Calculation Form
- Mileage Request for Use of DCCTC Activity Bus
- Certificate of Liability Insurance and quote is required for a Charter Bus.

The Certificate Holder/Additional Insured should be listed as:

Dorchester School District Four
500 Ridge Street, St. George, SC 29477

- Professional Leave Request Form (only for overnight or out-of-state field trips)

Substitutes

All staff members are required to record all absences and applicable leave in Red Rover, including sick leave, professional development, jury duty, vacation, and other approved absences. Absences should be entered as soon as possible to allow adequate time to secure a substitute through Kelly Education when one is needed. Staff members are responsible for ensuring that all absences are accurately and timely recorded in Red Rover, regardless of whether a substitute is required.

In-House Transfer Request Procedures

1. Complete the In-House Transfer Form
 - Provide your name, current location, desired location, and reason for requesting the transfer.
2. Acknowledge the Transfer Request
 - Confirm that you understand the request will be shared with all appropriate parties and that submission does not guarantee approval.
 - Obtain Required Signatures
 - Employee signature and date.
 - Current supervisor's signature and date.
 - Potential new supervisor's name and date/signature, as applicable.
3. Submit the Request to Human Resources
 - HR will review the completed request and coordinate with the appropriate parties.
4. HR Review and Decision
 - Human Resources will document the date the request is received and determine whether the request is granted or denied.
5. Final Notification
 - The employee will be informed of the decision once the HR review process is complete.

[Dorchester School District Four In-House Transfer Form](#)

Teaching and Learning/Instructional Expectations

In Dorchester School District Four, teaching and learning are guided by three pillars: Clarity, Execution, and Culture. Every employee shares responsibility for creating a safe, supportive, and academically focused environment in which all scholars are provided with a meaningful opportunity to thrive.

Instructional employees are expected to:

- Provide rigorous, grade-level, standards-aligned instruction using district-adopted high-quality instructional materials and common curriculum as the foundation.
- Thoughtfully internalize instructional materials and make intentional adjustments based on standards, scholar needs, and evidence of learning.
- Use clear Performance-Based Objectives that communicate what scholars should know, what they should be able to show.
- Explicitly teach and reinforce academic and content-specific vocabulary.
- Maintain high expectations while providing appropriate scaffolds, opportunities for productive struggle, and meaningful enrichment.
- Promote active, bell-to-bell engagement through scholar discourse, critical thinking, writing, collaboration, and application of learning.
- Use frequent checks for understanding, formative assessments, and other evidence of learning to adjust instruction and provide timely intervention or enrichment.
- Actively participate in Professional Learning Communities and use collaborative planning to strengthen curriculum alignment, instructional practice, and scholar outcomes.
- Implement district expectations related to assessment, data analysis, instructional coaching, feedback, intervention, and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support.
- Maintain a growth mindset and remain open to professional learning, coaching, feedback, and continuous improvement.

Special attention to the items above allows us to establish common expectations and coherent instructional systems that ensure every scholar receives high-quality learning experiences, regardless of classroom or school.

Finance and Payroll

Cash Handling Procedures

Many employees are required to deal with cash activity. Each school location or department should follow procedures for the handling and collecting of funds to ensure the safeguarding of these funds and to maintain reliable records for financial reporting.

The following procedures do not replace any specific requirements of a school or department. These procedures should be adhered to as a minimum requirement when employees collect funds:

- An employee who collects money must immediately process a receipt using receipt books provided by the school or department bookkeeper.
- All monies and a copy of the receipt should be turned in to the school or department bookkeeper daily.
Under no circumstances should the responsibility of turning in money be delegated to a student.

- According to [Board Policy DM: Cash in School Buildings](#), monies must be turned in and deposited each day. All monies must be held in a locked, secured place with limited access until deposited.
- Avoid unnecessary handling of funds.
 - Funds must be deposited intact and deposited as received.
 - Bookkeepers and others should avoid making change with the funds collected.
 - Checks may not be cashed under any circumstances.
- No employee should deposit money received from a parent, guardian, or student (for school fees, activities, or any school purchases) into a personal bank account at any time.
 - Employees may not receive school or district funds via a cash application such as Venmo, Zelle, or Cash App.
 - All payments must be made payable to the school or school district and turned into your school bookkeeper for deposit into the school's bank account.
- Schools must deposit all monies collected for other in-district schools daily. Once the school has collected and deposited those funds, the school bookkeeper should contact the Finance Department to make arrangements for a funds transfer.

Payroll

Payroll Issues

Employees should contact DD4's Payroll Department with questions about sick leave, vacation days, W-4 forms or changes, direct deposit or banking information, W-2 statements, federal and/or state tax questions, or paycheck notifications and issues.

Pay Schedules

Contingent upon the availability of funds, the pay schedule is as follows:

All full-time and part-time personnel will be paid bi-monthly.

- A bi-monthly payroll schedule will be set and distributed by July 1 of each year.
- As often as possible, payroll dates will occur on the 15th and 30th of each month. Should the 15th or 30th fall on a weekend or holiday, every effort will be made to schedule the payroll date on the preceding business day.

Timesheets

Employees who are required to complete timesheets for regular or supplemental pay are responsible for following the established payroll schedule.

Employees must submit their original timesheet to their supervisor **within one (1) business day after the end of the applicable pay period**. Each timesheet should include only the dates worked during the specified pay period.

Supervisors are responsible for reviewing and approving timesheets and submitting them to the payroll office by **4:00pm on the designated due date**. Timesheets received after the deadline may not be processed for the corresponding pay date.

Accurate and timely submission of timesheets is critical to ensure prompt processing.

Salary Information

Teacher and bus driver salary scales are available via the links below.

[Teacher Scale](#)

[Bus Driver Scale](#)

Employee Handbook Overview

This handbook is intended to provide employees with a general overview of key expectations, guidelines, and resources within our school district. It is important to recognize that the information contained in this handbook represents only a glimpse into the policies, procedures, and expectations that guide our work.

Our shared commitment is to put students first while supporting our employees. Every employee plays an important role in creating a positive, safe, and supportive learning environment for our students and a professional, collaborative workplace for our staff.

Employees are encouraged to use this handbook as a starting point and to seek clarification from their supervisor or the appropriate department when questions arise. More detailed district policies, procedures, regulations, and department-specific information are available through the district website.

For the most current information, please refer to:

[Dorchester School District Four Website](#)

Policies, procedures, and other guidance may be updated as needed. Employees are responsible for familiarizing themselves with applicable district policies and department-specific expectations and for referring to official district resources for the most current information.

Thank you for your continued commitment to our students, our schools, and our community. Your professionalism, dedication, and service are essential to the success of our district.