Rutherford County Board of Education

2240 Southpark Drive
Murfreesboro, TN 37128
(615) 893-5812

CERTIFIED EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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RUTHERFORD COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

- I understand that it is my responsibility to read and become familiar with the Certified Employee Handbook that is posted on the Rutherford County Schools web site at www.rcschools.net.

- I acknowledge that I have read the following information pertaining to benefits enrollment.
  - To enroll in insurance benefit coverage for myself or my eligible dependents, I must complete the necessary steps within thirty (30) calendar days of my date of hire. The first day of my employment serves as the first day of my thirty (30) calendar day deadline.
  - If I fail to enroll within thirty (30) calendar days of the start of my employment, I will have to wait until the Annual Enrollment period to enroll for benefits which would become effective in January of the following year.
  - I must provide documentation to verify my eligible dependents within thirty (30) calendar days of my date of hire. Dependent eligibility and documents needed for verification can be found at Employee Insurance & Benefits – Human Resources – Rutherford County Schools.
  - Should I acquire dependents or need to remove dependents, within thirty (30) calendar days of the event(s), I must contact the Benefits Department at benefits@rcschools.net.
  - I understand that information pertaining to my enrollment and utilization of the medical plan or other benefits offered to me through my employment will be available to the Benefits Department for the purpose of plan administration.

- I understand that if I am approved for a non-paid leave of absence, the Board of Education will not contribute any monies toward my monthly insurance premium unless I am on an approved Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave. It is my responsibility to notify Benefits of my leave status. This payment must be made by the 15th of the month to keep my insurance in effect.

- I understand that if I am a successful applicant that does not remain employed with the Board for a period of six (6) months, then the cost of the background check will be withheld from my last regular paycheck.

- If in a certified position, I understand that my employment is based on a year-to- year school contract beginning July 1st and ending June 30th until tenured.

- I understand that if a new degree is added to my Tennessee teaching license, it is my responsibility to provide a copy of that updated license to Human Resources.

- I understand that if I am hired as a part-time employee, I will not be eligible for benefits. I also understand that sick days will be earned at the rate of one (1) per twenty (20) days worked and a personal day will be earned at the rate of half (.5) for 100 days worked.

AMENDMENT OF HANDBOOK

It is the responsibility of all employees to carry out and comply with the rules, regulations and policies contained in this manual. The employee should be aware that these rules, regulations and policies are subject to periodic review and changes by the employer. Before relying upon the provisions set out herein, it is the employee's responsibility to check with the employer to see if any changes have occurred.

BOARD POLICIES

The Rutherford County Board of Education has established board policies to govern the school system. The policy manual is located on the Rutherford County web site. These policies are accessible and should be reviewed by all certified employees.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Nondiscrimination Policy

It is the policy of the Rutherford County School System not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or disability in its educational programs or employment policies as required by Titles VI and VII of the Civil Acts Rights of 1964, the Equal Pay Act of 1973, Title IX (1972 Educational Amendments), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Inquiries regarding compliance with Title IX should be directed to Pierrecia Lyons, Title IX Coordinator. Inquiries regarding Section 504 or the Americans with Disabilities Act should be directed to Dr. Andrea Anthony, Chief Personnel and Student Services Officer, of the Rutherford County School System, 2240 Southpark Drive, Murfreesboro, TN 37128. Complaints may also be filed with the Tennessee Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights at (615) 253-1550 and/or the United States Department of Education by contacting (404) 562-6446.

The current complaint managers for complaints involving harassment or discrimination are Dr. Andrea Anthony and Ms. Monika Ridley, General Counsel, Rutherford County School System, 2240 Southpark Drive, Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37128, Telephone: (615) 893-5812.

BENEFITS 615.893.5815 X 22023, benefits@rcschools.net

Employee health and welfare benefits are handled by the Benefits Department. A medical insurance plan is available to all regular full-time employees. To be eligible for the plan, the eligible employee must enroll in medical, vision or dental benefits on-line within thirty (30) calendar days of the hire date. The employee will receive complete instructions regarding benefit enrollment as part of your new hire information. If the employee does not enroll in benefits within thirty (30) calendar days starting with their date of hire, the employee must wait until the next annual enrollment period to enroll in the insurance program. The County provides a life insurance plan and long-term disability coverage to all benefit eligible employee at no cost to the employee.

(Special enrollment period: If an employee loses coverage under another health plan and (a) was under a COBRA continuation provision and the coverage under such provision was exhausted; or (b) was not under such a provision and either coverage was terminated as a result of loss of eligibility for the coverage (including as a result of legal separation, divorce, death, termination of employment, or reduction in the number of hours of employment) or employment contributions toward coverage were terminated; and the employee makes application under the plan within thirty (30) calendar days of losing coverage, then the employee will be allowed to enroll in the plan.)

If you are approved for a non-paid leave of absence, the Board of Education will not contribute any monies toward your monthly insurance premium unless you are on approved Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave. It is the employee's responsibility to notify the Benefits Department of the leave status and make the medical insurance payment. This payment must be made by the 15th of the month to keep insurance in effect. Once FMLA is exhausted, and if the employee remains on leave, the Board of Education will no longer contribute towards your medical premiums and your insurance. The employee shall pay full premium (both employee and employer portion amount) for one (1) year from the unpaid status. After the one (1) year, the employee will be offered COBRA for eighteen (18) months.

DEPENDENT COVERAGE

If you wish to enroll your spouse or your child(ren), starting with your date of hire, a benefit eligible employee has thirty (30) calendar days to elect coverage for themselves and/or eligible dependents. Eligible dependents include a current legal spouse, natural, adopted, step or foster children. Due to Affordable Care Act (ACA) requirements, all medical plan participants must have their name and social security number or Federal Identification Number (FIN) listed exactly as it appears on the employee or dependents social security or FIN card.

Verification of the dependent's eligibility is required to add a child or spouse to Medical, Vision or Dental benefits. A complete list of eligible dependents and acceptable documents required to provide eligibility is located on the Human Resources, Employee Benefits website located at rcschools.net. The required documentation must be provided to the Benefits Department no later than sixty (60) calendar days from an employee's date of hire to avoid removal of dependent(s) added.

A benefit eligible employee may request a special enrollment due to a qualifying life event such as a birth, death, adoption, marriage, divorce, or loss of coverage for employee or eligible dependent. In order to make a change in coverage due to a life event, the employee must notify the Benefits Department within thirty (30) calendar days of the qualifying event and provide documentation to prove eligibility for any dependent added.

DIVORCE AND YOUR SPOUSE'S INSURANCE COVERAGE

Divorce is a qualification for a special enrollment period. If you do not have insurance with the State's health plan but need to obtain insurance for yourself or your children following a divorce, you must do so within thirty (30) calendar days following the date on which the judge signs your final divorce papers (date of divorce).

If you maintain the insurance for you and your spouse through the State's health plan, your spouse

may remain on the insurance plan during the period of time that your divorce is being processed within the courts. Within thirty (30) calendar days following the finalization of your divorce, you must contact the Benefits Department and request to have your spouse removed from your insurance coverage elections. If, as part of your divorce settlement, you are required to provide insurance coverage for your ex-spouse, you must obtain an individual insurance plan for your ex-spouse through an insurance agent or if your ex-spouse obtains insurance through their employer, you may choose to pay the insurance premium.

LTD (Long Term Disability)

The County also provides benefit eligible employees a Long Term Disability (LTD) insurance plan as part of the benefit package. Eligibility for the benefit is determined by the same guidelines for all other benefits. The insured plan provides a benefit of 66.67% of your earnings to a maximum of $6,000 per month. You must be disabled for at least 180 days before you can receive the LTD benefit.

A full description of all benefits can be found on the Employee Benefits page, under the Human Resources section on the website. For claims and other questions call the Benefits Department at 2240 Southpark Dr, 615-893-5812.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT (ACA)

You've likely heard about the health care reform law called the Affordable Care Act (ACA). This law was enacted, in part, to ensure all Americans have access to affordable health insurance. On January 1, 2014, the law requires all Americans (with limited exceptions) to have health insurance; those who don't will be subject to a tax penalty. This new requirement applies to you and your dependents.

Health coverage through Rutherford County Board of Education (BOE)

The BOE is pleased to offer high-quality, affordable health insurance to its eligible employees and their families.

If you are eligible for the State's health plan but currently do not have health coverage, now is a good time to consider all your health insurance options.

If you are not currently eligible for the State's health plan, you may wish to review your other options, such as a spouse's or parent's plan or the Health Insurance Marketplace.

JOB RELATED INJURIES (When Injured on the Job)

Filing a Claim

All injuries and/or illnesses on the job, whether requiring medical attention or not, must be reported to the supervisor immediately or within the current working shift after such occurrence. If the accident involves loss of consciousness, fatality, broken bones, loss of a body part or third- degree burns, the supervisor should be notified immediately. It is then the responsibility of the supervisor to immediately notify Jayne Corbin, Safety Coordinator, 615.898.7715 ext. 7720.

The following steps should be followed when injured:

- Supervisors must call in notification of an OJI to the Risk Management Department within one (1) working day from the date of occurrence.
- Completed reports of injuries and/or illnesses and other documentation must be filed with the Risk Management Department by the supervisor on all injuries, accidents and/or illnesses whether medical treatment is necessary or not, within two (2) working days from the date of the event. The OJI Coordinator or designee (OJI Representative) will complete and sign off on all reports of injuries, accidents and/or illnesses.
- Select an authorized physician from the Panel of Physicians listed on the claim report. Complete and sign the form. Be sure to keep a copy for your records.
- If you desire, seek medical treatment from the physician you selected from the **Panel of Physicians**. Do not go to your primary care physician - **it is not protocol and will not be paid for through the OJI Program**.
- ER visits are NOT protocol, unless there is a dire need (e.g. a broken bone, torn ligament or bleeding profusely). However, if a work-related injury happens after hours during the week or the weekend, you are permitted to utilize the ER – **provided your supervisor is aware of the injury**.
- Notify your supervisor of your condition and when the physician recommends you return to work.
- To avoid out of pocket expenses, prescriptions must be filled at one of the authorized pharmacies.
- If the physician recommends light or restricted duty and your supervisor can provide a job within your restrictions, you MUST report to work. Failure to report will terminate your OJI benefits.
- The supervisor shall complete the **Return to Work Agreement** by listing the light duty jobs that fall within the employee's restrictions. The supervisor shall also explain the restrictions to the employee and have the employee sign the agreement as acknowledgement of understanding the restrictions.
- If there is no light duty available, you will be out of work and paid through the OJI Program.

All questions regarding job related injuries should be directed to the Rutherford County Safety Coordinator at 615-898-7715 ext. 7720

DIRECT DEPOSIT

Direct Deposit is the required method of payment for all employees. Each employee must complete the direct deposit form and attach a voided check or confirmation letter from the bank of their choice.

EPAYSTUB ACCOUNT

Once you have received your first paycheck, all employees must register for an epaystub

account. Your epaystub will be active after your first payroll date; you can view your information once you create an account after your first paycheck is issued.

The epaystub information will be cumulative for a period up to seven (7) years and will roll off as years are added beyond seven (7) years. Once registered, you will receive an automatic email notice each time a new epaystub is ready for viewing. You may register for an account with a personal or RCS email address. The instructions for creating an account are below.

Instructions:

1. Go to https://secured.rutherfordcountytn.gov/epaystub/login.aspx

   ***If you get a security error, please continue to website anyway.**

2. If this is your first time on the site, you will need to verify who you are.

   Follow the directions in BLUE
   Username: use your last name + the last 4 digits of your SSN (Ex: smith1234) Password: your 5 digit zip code + the last 4 digits of your SSN (Ex: 371291234)

   Check the following if you receive a receive a failed attempt notice:

   1) If you have recently moved, use the old zip code.
   2) If you have recently changed your last name, try your previous name.
   3) If you have a hyphenated last name, for example you are Jones-Smith, enter with a space instead of the hyphen. example – jones smith1234

If you are in the employee database, another screen will appear in which you will enter the email address where you want to receive your paystub emails. Type your password and re-enter it to confirm it is correct.

3. You will receive an email at the address you entered that contains a link to verify your email. Click on this link.

4. Upon account verification, the login screen will appear. Use the email address you entered previously as the username and the new password you created.
   Username: ***your email address***
   Password: ***The one you set up***

If you need assistance, please call 615-898-7762 select option 2 or email software@rutherfordcountytn.gov

NOTE: You will not be able to login until you have received at least one paycheck.

SUPPLEMENTAL 403B RETIREMENT PLANS

VALIC-COREBRIDGE is the 403(b) provider for Rutherford County Schools. VALIC COREBRIDGE is the only vendor that can accept new 403(b) contributions from RCS employees.

VALIC Retirement offers three types of 403(b) accounts

- Portfolio Director's Choice, a full service fixed and variable annuity program
- Profile Retirement Program, a no-load mutual fund program
- Schwab Personal Choice Retirement Account, self-directed investment program

VALIC-COREBRIDGE also offers a Pre-tax and Roth 457 plan.

Each type offers a broad variety of investment options. Your 403(b) account can be either a traditional tax-deferred 403(b) or a Roth 403(b) which uses after-tax income with a potential for tax-free growth.

You can start or make changes to your retirement savings program during the school year. You can contact VALIC-COREBRIDGE for an appointment at 404-922-3689.

www.valic.com/rutherford has additional information for Rutherford County employees and allows you to access your account online. (Schwab PCRA accounts must be accessed through the Schwab site.)

EXPERIENCE VERIFICATION

New certified employees with Tennessee with out-of-state or private school experience are required to provide a VERIFICATION OF EXPERIENCE form prior to December 1 of the school year employed. This form must be signed by the authorized person in the former school system. Any verified experience received in the payroll office after December 1 will not be eligible to be applied toward the salary for the given year. The certified employee will be paid on the established degree and zero (0) years of experience during the time prior to December 1 while verification forms are being processed and reviewed.

The burden of proof for experience rests with the individual certified employee.

Experience guidelines are posted on the RCS website, Human Resources & Careers page and can be found here.

NEW DEGREES

Upon completion of coursework for a new degree, current employees must complete the appropriate paperwork with the Institute of Higher Education and the State Department of Education. Salary adjustments are made ONLY for degrees earned by December of the given year AND when new licenses verifying the new degree are presented to the Central Office during that given year.

- Documentation of new degrees earned by August must be filed with the State Department of Education on or before December 1 of the current school year. The pay increase will be

applied to the entire contract year.

- Documentation of new degrees earned by December must be filed with the State Department of Education on or before February 1 of the current school year. The pay increase will be applied to the second half of the contract.
- Salary adjustments including retroactive pay, will be made upon submissions of a copy of the new license, signed by the employee to verify accuracy, to Human Resources based on the current salary schedule. In the spring of each year a memo will be sent to each school requesting certified employees to inform the Central Office of anticipated new degrees. Failure to notify the Central Office of the anticipated degree may result in the employee not receiving the pay advancement until the following school year.

New employees will be paid on the degree shown on their TN teaching license. If an additional degree is pending (May or August graduation date) our office must be notified and provided with documentation at the time of employment to support a salary adjustment once a new license reflecting the advanced degree is presented.

IN-SERVICE REQUIREMENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER 615-893-5812, EXT 22073

The Tennessee State Department of Education requires that all certified teachers in Tennessee schools complete thirty hours (or five days in a 200 day contract] of in-service training each year. Rutherford County has determined that for the 2026-2027 school year these hours will be distributed as follows:

Date	No. of hours	Person Responsible
Tuesday, Aug. 4th, 2026	6 hours	Principal
Wednesday, Aug. 5th, 2026	6 hours	Principal
Monday, Jan. 4th, 2027	6 hours	Principal
Independent Hours	**6 hours**	**Individuals**
Independent Hours	**6 hours**	**Individuals**

To satisfy the independent hours requirement, individuals will need to complete TWELVE (12) hours of in-service outside normal school hours in accordance with their teaching assignment or content that grows them in the classroom.

In-service hours must be dedicated **towards improving instruction** in the classroom with the guidelines developed by the Tennessee State Department of Education: https://www.tn.gov/education/districts/lea-operations/inservice-guidelines.html

All PD hours must be completed and recorded in Professional Learning by midnight on

Wednesday, May 12th, 2027

CONTRACUTAL IN-SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

All full-time (200 days) teachers under contract with Rutherford County Schools must complete **twelve (12) hours** of independent in-service to receive full pay for their 200 day contract. For payroll purposes, each **teaching position** earns **12 hours** pay for the completion of independent in-service hours and in no case shall the total independent in-service hours paid to any **one position** exceed **twelve hours**. Teachers hired into a new or growth position are allowed the opportunity to earn the full twelve hours of pay (and credit for teaching experience) for independent activities regardless of the beginning date of their contract.

Teachers who accept a full year interim position will also be allowed to earn **12 hours** of in-service. In-service allocations for interim positions will be different for each situation and will need to be addressed on an individual basis. **If you are in doubt regarding your in-service requirements, please call the Professional Development Center at 615-893-5815 extension 22073 or 21711.**

2025-2026 FOCUS REQUIREMENTS

Within the required **twelve 12 hours of independent in-service,** the subject areas listed below have focus requirements. These will be labeled as such in Professional Learning.

All Intervention teachers are required – **2 hours** in content intervention.

All **CTE** teachers must complete all hours from Career and Technical Education content (the teacher's certification areas and trainings count).

All other certified teachers and certified 200 day contract employees will complete 12 hours in content credit that grows the teacher in the classroom.

TENNESSEE GUIDELINES FOR APPROVABLE IN-SERVICE ACTIVITIES

In-service education is defined as a program of planned activities designed to increase the competencies needed by all licensed personnel in the performance of their professional responsibilities. In this context, "competencies" are defined as the knowledge, skills, and attitudes which enable personnel to carry out their tasks with maximum effectiveness.

The following have been designated by the Tennessee Department of Education as non-approvable Activities for In-service:

Parent/Teacher Conferences
Teachers working in their rooms
Putting grades on permanent record forms
Business meetings for professional associations
College courses for credit (towards a degree)
Coaching, band, or cheerleading clinics working with students portions
(any activity for which the teacher is supervising students is not allowable PD credit)

Rutherford County Guidelines

Guidelines on Professional Development

These guidelines follow state guidelines and were developed by an RCS PD Committee

1. In-service credit shall not be issued for participation in activities which are scheduled during regular teaching days or any other paid in-service days. Certified employees are paid for the 12 hours of in-service/PD, so earning this PD pay during the workday would be double dipping and not allowable (sick days, inclement weather, and personal days are paid days).

2. Teachers may **not** earn in-service credit for days designated by them as sick leave, maternity leave, or personal days. For any days you are unsure if PD can be earned, contact the PD center by phone or email listed at the end of this document.

3. Teachers who participate in **any** training for which they are paid will not receive in-service credit.

4. A maximum of 4 presenters will receive double credit to present training for Rutherford County teachers. Any exception needs approval.

5. During share sessions, a facilitator is assigned to turn in the request for PD approval, sign-in sheets, and agendas/discussion questions. The facilitator leads the session. New learning should be the focus.

6. PD earned before the hire date with Rutherford County Schools (PD at other systems) can't be credited and paid out by Rutherford County Schools.

7. Teacher-led PDs are trainings where a teacher, other than an instructional coach, district specialist or admin, trains other RCS educators.
   Before training, the teacher trainer should receive school administrator approval and submit an agenda with the Alternative PD request on Professional Learning (steps below). **This includes summer requests.** After approval, the presenter sends the PD center the sign-in sheet from the *Resources* tab in Professional Learning. The maximum number of hours for this type of PD is 6 credit hours per training. If a district specialist/representative or principal requests a teacher lead a training, these guidelines are not necessary.
   Planning VS. In-service: Please note the state does not see planning as professional learning. For more information, see the note at the end of this document on *Professional Learning Mindshift.*

8. The state encourages mentoring teachers. Approval for mentoring requires school administrator approval. The presenter sends the PD center the multi-day sign-in sheet and an agenda. The maximum number of hours for this type of PD is 4 credit hours total for the year. This does not refer to MTSU liason mentoring.

9. Tasks such as committees and any event working with students are not allowable in-service by the state's guidelines. Activities such as Calendar Committees or events where parents or students are present are duties that can best be recognized on the teacher's TEAMS Professionalsim Rubric, but not in-service.

10. See Book Study guidelines below.

11. CPR/First Aid can be earned. Email PD center documents of completion.

12. The first of the year trainings (completed and tracked at the school level, such as Jason Foundation and BloodBorne Pathogens) can't be counted for the 12 hours of PD for the year. These can be completed during the workday. The trainings are mandated by the state.

In accordance with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), any disabled person requiring accommodations for participation in an in-service session should contact **Marcie Leeman** at extension 22069 leemanm@rcschools.net at least two working days prior to the session so that appropriate accommodations can be made.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

You may access your PD records and register for in-service sessions on Professional Learning. Go to your school website under *STAFF, Professional Learning*. **Print/Save your transcript report each year for your records.** How to log-in: User name: entire RCS email address (ex., smithb@rcschools.net) Password: default password is *boro*

ALTERNATIVE PD IN-SERVICE

REQUEST ONLINE

The tab to request this PD is called ***Alternative PD*** on **Professional Learning**

All in-services posted on Professional Learning have been approved by Rutherford County Schools. In order to receive credit for an alternative professional development not in Professional Learning, including virtual learning outside of RCS offerings**,** approval must be granted at least **48 hours** prior to the PD. This is a two step process:
Step 1 is Pre-Approval (permissions) and the will turn to *Pending* status until after the PD is over then

Step 2 is attaching documentation of attendance to the request when the PD is over. A certificate or sign-in sheet after the PD will suffice. Careful, teachers often forget to return to attach docs after training.

BOOK STUDY

If you would like to lead a book study, you will need to complete an alternative PD request for approval at least 48 hours before reading begins. School site Administrator approval is required. An agenda must be uploaded with the request for approval.

The maximum credit hours that can be earned is **6 hours**. Two (2) hours of in-service credit will be given for reading the book and up to 4 hours for book discussion meetings. You must attend at least one meeting after reading to receive 2 hours credit. If you are the presenter, you may earn a maximum of **10 hours**. If more than one person is presenting, note that in the creation of the alternative PD.

- Use a sign-in sheet. It is under the Resources tab on Professional Learning and linked.

- **The individual who completed the Alternative PD will send documentation of attendance to the Professional Development Center and/or attach it to the Alternative PD after the first meeting and at least once a month for payroll records.**

- **Virtual Book Studies requirements**: training after the regular teaching day and trainer receives pre-approval as noted above. A list of names/attendees email usernames can be filled out by the trainer, so records indicate which teachers attended sessions for credit. The facilitator sends in all documents to the PD center via email or courier and /or attaching to the Alternative PD as documentation after training.

REMINDERS OF PROFESSIONAL OBLIGATIONS

If you find that you are unable to attend a session, please cancel in a timely manner. We often have teachers who want to attend required sessions that have no space available and are on a wait list.

- Please expect no less from yourself than you would expect from your students with regard to behavior during in-service sessions. It is not acceptable to have presenters feel a need to correct the behavior of professional educators.
- Please do not plan to bring children with you to in-service sessions. Even when children are well behaved, they may create a distraction for others and interfere with their learning.
- If you find it necessary to leave early or arrive late, please do not expect to receive full credit for an in-service session.

If you have professional development related questions, do not hesitate to reach out the Professional Development Center at 615-893-5815 ext. 22073

Professional Learning Mindshift- While team *meetings, tasks, and planning* are very important activities, in most cases they are not related directly to most educators' effectiveness and therefore do not qualify as defined PD. When applying for license or renewal, the state says these activities are not directly related to enhancing the teacher effectiveness. Professional learning should be data driven and grow the teacher's content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, or pedagogical content knowledge. There are events and activities a teacher may choose to attend that benefit their school. While these activities may not qualify for in-service credit, the educator can benefit by adding the activities to the TEAMS Professionalism Rubric for evaluative purposes.

RETIREMENT

It is compulsory that all full-time regular certified employees be members of Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS). Retirement and Social Security will automatically be deducted from the employee's check each month. This guideline provides a review of benefits broken down by classification of employment status.

a) TCRS Legacy Plan – June 30, 2014 is the cutoff date for membership in the existing TCRS Legacy Plan for teachers. TN teachers who belonged to the TCRS Retirement Plan during the 2013-14 school year or previously employed TN teachers who are still active members of TCRS will keep their membership in the Legacy Plan. This plan is a traditional pension or defined benefit plan.

*A previously employed TN teacher will have lost her/his TCRS Legacy Plan membership if the teacher withdrew her/his employee contributions or if the teacher was not vested and has not been employed as a teacher for seven (7) years or more. TCRS staff will decide the status of these teachers.

**New teachers hired after July 1, 2014, who were previously employed as support staff who are already members of the TCRS Legacy Retirement Plan will go to the new TCRS Hybrid Teacher Plan. However, TCRS will maintain a separate Legacy Retirement Plan account for that employee's time as support staff provided service is not terminated.

b) TCRS Hybrid Plan - New teachers hired after July 1, 2014, who do not have an active membership in the TCRS Legacy Plan as a teacher will be enrolled in the Hybrid Plan. The Hybrid Plan has two components:

A. Traditional Pension or Defined Benefit plan – Five (5) years of service are required for vesting
B. State 401(k) or Defined Contribution plan – immediate vesting for employee. Monies in this plan are deposited in the employee's state 401(K) account. RetireReadyTN is the stat's current 401(k) provider- https://treasury.tn.gov/Retirement/Retire-Ready-Tennessee/Discover-RetireReadyTN The employee is responsible for managing his/her account.

    a) Employee contribution is two percent (2%) - All Hybrid Plan employees are automatically enrolled with two percent (2.0%) employee contribution. Employees may opt out of making this two percent (2.0%) contribution or contribute a different amount. The state recommends that employees contribute at least two percent (2%).

        i. School system contribution is five percent (5%).

All enrollment, beneficiary notification, name/address changes, annual statements etc. must be accessed/ completed online through the TCRS Concord website:
https://mytcrs.tn.gov/DPAS.WebUI.Internet/Common/Pages/Login.aspx

INTERIM teachers have optional membership rights in the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement

System (TCRS). The federal law now imposes a ten- percent (10%) penalty on tax-deferred contributions withdrawn from a retirement system prior to retirement age. Since a majority of interim teachers obtain a refund on their TCRS account, this will allow the employee to avoid the ten percent (10%) penalty tax by electing not to join TCRS. If the employee elects not to join the employee must sign the appropriate form. A web link to TCRS can be located on the RCS web site under Human Resources.

After an employee is eligible to receive vested medical insurance benefits through the County and upon said County employee's voluntary retirement from the County, any sick leave which the employee has accrued as of the date of retirement shall be reported by the County to the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System. Any unused sick leave on the date of retirement may be credited by TCRS at the rate of one month of retirement credit for each twenty (20) days of unused leave. Sick leave is not recognized for retirement purposes until the employee has retired and the sick leave has been certified by the County. Regular part-time certified employees have optional membership rights in TCRS.

PERSONNEL FILES (Policy 5.114)

An individualized personnel file will be maintained on each employee. It is the responsibility of each employee to provide accurate information to the employer. Employees are responsible for reporting to the employer any change in the information which they have previously provided. This includes name, address, phone number, retirement and life insurance beneficiary information, and W-4 information.

The director of schools or his designee(s) shall be authorized to maintain personnel records and to permit inspection of the same, except for matters deemed confidential by law. The following personnel records shall be maintained for all employees as appropriate:

1. Employee applications and contracts;
2. Professional certificates and other documents required by state and federal laws and regulations;
3. Evaluations; and
4. INS Form I-9

CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECKS

T.C.A. 49-5-413(a) requires any individual applying for a position as a teacher in 49-5-501 or in a position requiring close proximity to school children to supply a fingerprint sample and submit to a criminal history records check to be conducted by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI). Rutherford County Board of Education requires the criminal history background check and fingerprinting of all applicants for employment.

Any cost incurred by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation or any other approved investigation service in conducting such investigations of applicants shall be paid by the Board the first time such applicant applies for a position with the Board. If a successful applicant does not remain employed with the Board for a period of six (6) months, then the cost of the background check will be withheld from the employee's last regular paycheck. All applicants shall be advised that all hiring decisions are contingent upon satisfactory background check results.

Rutherford County Schools (RCS) participates in the Rap Back Program. The purpose of the Rap Back program is to allow RCS to receive updated Tennessee and national fingerprint based criminal arrest and disposition information on individuals who are employed or otherwise under the purview of RCS. Information supplied to RCS is based on information that is received by TBI. Rap Back responses will be in accordance to State/National arrest data that have been reported. Rutherford County Schools criminal record review and Rap Back process will conform with the requirements established pursuant to Public Law 92-544 and other applicable state or federal laws.

ASSIGNMENT/TRANSFERS (Policy 5.115)

The Director of Schools shall assign, transfer and reassign personnel as necessary for efficient operation of the school system.

SEPARATION PRACTICES (Policies 5.200 and 5.201)

Rutherford County Policies 5.200 and 5.201 outline the conditions and stipulations for suspension, dismissal, nonrenewal, resignation, and retirement for tenured and non-tenured teachers.

EVALUATION MODEL

The State of Tennessee has selected the TEAM model to evaluate all certified employees who serve in our schools. School administrators are required to review the evaluation model and process in the fall of each year with their certified staff.

TENURE (Policy 5.117)

To attain tenure status, a teacher shall: (1) meet tenure eligibility requirements; (2) be renewed and recommended by the Director of Schools; and (3) receive a majority vote of the Board.

A teacher that meets the following requirements is eligible for tenure:

1. Has a degree from an approved four-year college or any career and technical teacher who has the equivalent amount of training established and is licensed by the State Board of Education;
2. Holds a valid teaching license issued by the State Board of Education, based on training covering the subjects or grades taught;
3. Has completed a probationary period of five (5) school years or not less than forty-five
4. (45) months within the last seven-year period with the last two (2) years being employed in a regular teaching position rather than an interim teaching position; and,
5. Has received evaluations demonstrating an overall performance effectiveness level of "above expectations" or "significantly above expectations" as provided in the evaluation guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education, during the last two (2) years of the probationary period.

If a teacher has met all other requirements for tenure eligibility but has not acquired an official

evaluation score during the last one (1) or two (2) years of the probationary period due to allowable circumstances outlined in state law, he/she may utilize the most recent two (2) years of available evaluation scores achieved during the probationary period to become eligible for tenure.

STUDENT HANDBOOK AND CODE OF CONDUCT

As per T.C.A. 49-6-4017 a Code of Conduct is updated annually and made available on the Rutherford County Schools website for all students, parents, administrators, teachers and staff. This is a compilation of policies, procedures and regulations governing the conduct of students in the Rutherford County Schools. Teachers have the responsibility to become familiar with the Student Handbook and Code of Conduct.

SAFE SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

Students, faculty and staff must have a safe and secure environment in which to teach, learn and thrive. A safe learning environment is therefore critical to allow students to feel empowered to learn. To that end, Rutherford County Schools has undertaken specific programs to both predict and prevent school violence, and to aggressively counter bullying of students. Each school has a dedicated School Safety Team, with specific roles and responsibilities of each team member. Each employee is to work with this School Safety Team, and become familiar with the counselors, school psychologists, SRO's, and other specialists in each school's staff dedicated to the school climate and safety. All employees are mandatory reporters of bullying, harassment, threats of violence, suicide, and child abuse/neglect.

SCHOOL EMERGENCY OPERATIONS & SAFETY PLANS

All Rutherford County Schools are required to produce both an Emergency Operations Plan, provided to area first responder agencies, and a Rutherford County Schools Safety/Crisis Plan. Either an electronic or a paper copy of the RCS Safety/Crisis Plan must be provided to each employee. It is the employee's responsibility to become thoroughly familiar with this plan. Employees must further be familiar with the Incident Command structure, and the responsibilities of Incident Command team leaders. The employee is also responsible for ensuring substitutes have access to a copy of the Rutherford County Schools Safety/Crisis Plan.

EMPLOYEECOMPLAINT FORM/COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

The Board of Education has adopted a complaint form and procedure that must be followed by those individuals wishing to pursue a complaint against a certified employee. These forms and procedures are available at the Central Office.

DISCRIMINATION/HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS, CERTIFIED AND CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES (Policy 5.500)

Policy 5.500 outlines the definition and procedure for reporting harassment/discrimination. Harassment/discrimination will not be tolerated. All reports must be investigated in accordance with the appropriate policy. Noncompliance with the policy will be reported to the Director of Schools.

All employees have the responsibility to become familiar with these policies and to report any abuse where there is a reasonable cause to suspect.

ETHICS (Policy 5.611)

High standards are expected of all representatives of the Rutherford County School System.

An effective educational program requires the services of men and women of integrity, high ideals and human understanding. To maintain and promote these essentials, all employees are expected to maintain high standards in their school relationships. These standards include the following:

1. The maintenance of just and courteous professional relationships with student, parent(s), staff members and others;
2. The maintenance of their own efficiency and knowledge of the developments in their fields of work;
3. The transaction of all official business with the properly designated authorities of the school system;
4. The establishment of friendly and intelligent cooperation between the community and the school system;
5. The representation of the school system on all occasions that the contributions of the school system to the community are recognized;
6. The welfare of children as the first concern of the school system when placing professional personnel. The use of pressure on school officials for appointments or transfers is unethical;
7. Restraint from using school contacts and privileges to promote partisan politics, sectarian religious views or selfish propaganda of any kind;
8. The responsibility to make any criticism of other staff members or of the school system directly to the particular school administrator who has the administrative responsibility for improving the situation and then to the director of schools, if necessary; and
9. The proper use and protection of all school properties, equipment and materials.

SUPERVISION (Policy 5.108)

Policy 5.108 (Supervision) requires all employees to report being charged with any criminal offense or being named as an indicated perpetrator of child abuse by the Department of Children's Services to their immediate supervisor in writing within seventy-two (72) hours of the offense. All employees shall, within seventy-two (72) hours, report to their immediate supervisor if the employee is a petitioner or respondent on a restraining order or order of protection. Restraining orders and orders of protection issued pursuant to a divorce decree or other court order are exempt from this requirement. Certified employees shall, within seventy-two (72) hours of receiving notice from the Tennessee Department of Education, report to their immediate supervisor their teaching license has been "flagged" by the Tennessee Department of Education for any reason. The supervisor must notify the Director of Schools immediately. Failure to comply with the reporting requirements listed above will be considered insubordination and cause for disciplinary action.

TUTORING FOR PAY (Policy 5.608)

No employee may charge a pupil a fee for any service rendered the pupil on the school premises or during school hours, or for any teaching service connected with the school system. Tutoring one's own pupils for pay is prohibited. No employee may sell to pupils any goods or equipment of any kind, or render any commercial service to the school system on a commission basis, nor may any employee receive royalties on books or materials which has been written and sold for use in the school system during his tenure of office in the organization.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Advantage xPO is the substitute teacher provider for the current school year. Certified employees must contact the building principal and the substitute teacher vendor when there is a need for an absence. State law and the teacher contract govern the use of personal days.

Teachers are required to have a substitute teacher folder available containing such materials as would be necessary to conduct class in the teacher's absence. This material would include, but not be limited to: lesson plans, attendance sheets, seating charts, and extra assignments.

Substitute teachers are, in many instances, not professional teachers. They are trained to carry out the directions that are provided by the teachers. It is the teacher's responsibility to plan and provide that direction.

Remember that substitute teachers are the employees of Advantage xPO and that all arrangements for substitutes must be made through Advantage xPO. All substitute teachers are to be paid by the Board of Education. No individual may pay a substitute teacher directly.

LEAVE

SICK LEAVE (Policy 5.302)

The time allowed for sick leave for personnel shall be one (1) day for each month employed during the school year and shall accumulate for an unlimited number of days.

Sick leave shall be defined as: illness of an employee from natural causes or accident, mental health quarantine, or illness or death of a member of the immediate family of the employee, including the employee's wife or husband, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter- in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, and sister-in-law.

A signed statement listing the cause of absence shall be provided by the employee on forms furnished by the Director of Schools and shall promptly be given to the immediate supervisor in support of all claims for sick leave pay. A falsified statement shall be grounds for termination.

A certificate from the physician on forms furnished by the Board may be required in support of any claim for sick leave pay and will always be required in support of absences for more than three (3) consecutive days. The procedures for long-term leaves are addressed in Board Policy 5.304.

Permanent, cumulative sick leave records for each active employee shall be kept in the Director of Schools' office.

A teacher, upon employment, may transfer their accumulated sick leave from another Tennessee school system, provided that the Director of Schools of the system in which the accumulated leave was held provides notarized verification.

In accordance with state law, any employee who goes on maternity/paternity leave shall be allowed to use all or a portion of the employee's accumulated sick or annual leave for maternity/paternity leave purposes. In order to be eligible to use sick leave, written request of the employee accompanied by a statement from the employee's physician verifying pregnancy shall be submitted. Upon verification by a written statement from an adoption agency or other entity handling an adoption, an employee may also be allowed to use accumulated leave for adoption of a child. If both adoptive parents are employees employed by the district, however, only one (1) parent is entitled to use such leave. The procedures for Family and Medical Leave are addressed in Board Policy 5.305.

The time allowed/days earned for sick leave shall be one (1) day for each month an employee is employed. Interim certified teachers will earn one (1) sick day per month upon contracting with the District. All other interim employees shall begin earning one (1) day of sick leave for each month employed by the District after six (6) months of interim employment.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE (Policy 5.302)

Certified and classified personnel with at least six (6) months of service, shall be granted bereavement leave up to three (3) days per event in the event of death of an immediate family member. Interim employees and re-employed retirees will be granted bereavement leave up to three (3) days per event in the event of death of an immediate family member after six (6) months of employment. Immediate family member shall include the employee's spouse/legal guardians, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, siblings, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, step- mother, step-father, step-siblings, step-children, step-grandchildren, and foster children. Personnel shall be granted bereavement leave up to one (1) day per event in the event of death of a cousin, aunt, uncle, niece, or nephew. If additional days are needed for out of state travel, personnel shall discuss with the principal the need to use up to two (2) additional sick days without the requirement of a doctor's note. Personnel will be responsible for submitting bereavement documentation within five (5) working days of returning to work.

SICK LEAVE BANK (Policy 5.302)

The purpose of the sick leave bank is to provide sick leave to all employees who have suffered an unplanned personal illness, injury, disability, or quarantine and whose personal sick leave is exhausted.

To form a sick leave bank, a minimum of twenty (20) employees from the school system shall petition the Board for permission to establish a sick leave bank. Upon approval, sick leave bank trustees shall be appointed and shall operate as the governing body of the sick leave bank and shall enact rules and regulations consistent with state law. Employees wishing to participate shall initially give a maximum of three (3) days of sick leave. These days are to be deducted from the employee's personal accumulation and donated to the sick leave bank. Donations of sick leave to

the bank are nonrefundable and nontransferable.

At any time, the number of days in the sick leave bank is less than twenty (20), or one (1) per employee if there are more than twenty (20) members, or at any time deemed advisable, the trustees shall assess each member one (1) or more days of accumulated sick leave. If an employee has no accumulated sick leave at the time of assessment, the first earned days shall be donated as they are accrued by the employee.

An employee who is a member of the sick leave bank may request an allotment of days (for the employee's personal illness or on account of an illness of his/her minor) in the manner designated by the trustees. The need for these days must be verified by a statement from a doctor.

By written notice to the trustees, an employee may withdraw from bank participation on June 30 of any year. Membership withdrawal results in forfeiture of all days contributed. For more information, see the Sick Bank Guidelines.

The sick leave bank shall be operated in accordance with state law.

LEAVES OF ABSENCE

When requesting a leave of absence for **more than five (5) days** the **APPLICATION FOR LEAVE** form must be submitted to the Benefits for consideration by the Director of Schools. This application must be filed thirty (30) days prior to the requested beginning date. This thirty (30) day filing date may be waived by the Director of Schools in the case of documented emergency.

If a non-paid leave of absence is granted and you are enrolled in the State Health Plan and/or have purchased additional short term disability insurance it will be your responsibility to contact the Benefits Department to make arrangements for paying the total premium for the duration of the leave of absence.

Employees requesting extended / maternity leave must submit a physician's statement verifying disability / pregnancy along with the completed leave form. Pursuant to board policy, employees requesting extended / maternity leave may use all or a portion of accumulated sick leave for maternity / disability purposes during the period of physical disability only, as determined by the physician's statement. Any combination of sick and non-paid days may be used, however any designated sick days must be used on the front end of the leave. Under FMLA, maternity leave may not exceed twelve (12) weeks from the date of delivery. Once your FMLA is exhausted, Board of Education contributions towards premiums will cease and you will be eligible for continuation of insurance coverage through COBRA or portability rights.

The **REACTIVATION FORM** must be submitted to the Benefits at least one (1) week before the employee returns to work to reactivate the payroll status.

FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE (Policy 5.305)

Employees who have been employed for at least twelve (12) months by the school district and anyone who has at least 1,250 hours of service during the previous twelve (12) month period

may be granted up to twelve (12) weeks unpaid leave during a fixed calendar year for the following reasons:

a) The birth of a child;
b) The placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care;
c) A serious health condition of the employee that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of his or her job position;
d) The care of a spouse, child, or parent of the employee who has a serious health condition; and
e) Any qualifying circumstances arising out of the fact that a spouse, child, or parent of the employee is on covered active duty or has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty in the Armed Forces.

Granting of leave under this policy shall be subject to, and in accordance with, the provisions of applicable federal and state laws. An employee may substitute accrued paid leave for unpaid time. Use of accrued paid leave shall run concurrently with and be counted toward the employee's total period of FMLA leave.

ADOPTION LEAVE

Upon verification by a written statement from an adoption agency or other entity handling an adoption, a teacher may also be allowed to use accumulated leave for adoption of a child. If both adoptive parents are teachers employed by the district, however, only one (1) parent is entitled to use such leave.

Spouses who are both eligible employees of the school district are limited to a combined total of twelve (12) workweeks of FMLA leave in a single twelve (12) month period if the leave is taken for the placement of a child for adoption or foster care.

Please contact Benefits for any FMLA questions.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LEAVE (Policy 5.303)

All certified personnel shall be able to retain up to five (5) earned personal days. Any personal leave days beyond the five (5) shall be credited as sick leave.

If, at the termination of services, any employee has been absent for more days than leave has been earned, an amount sufficient to cover the excess days used shall be deducted from the employee's final salary payment.

Subject to the following conditions, personal leave may be taken at the discretion of the employee:

1. Except in emergency, each employee shall give the principal/supervisor at least one day's notice in writing of intent to take leave;

2. The approval of the principal of the school shall be required:

   a. If more than ten percent (10%) of the teachers in any given school request its use on the

same day;
b. If requested during any prior established student examination period;
c. If requested on the day immediately preceding or following a holiday or vacation period;
d. If personal leave is requested for days scheduled for professional development or in-service training, according to a school calendar adopted by the local board of education prior to the commencement of the school year; or
e. If personal leave is requested for days scheduled for parent-teacher conferences, according to a school calendar adopted by the local board of education prior to the commencement of the school year.

Professional leave is a short, temporary absence for the purpose of attending workshops and other meetings relating to school business or serving on boards and commissions which meet during daytime hours when appointed by a mayor, city council, county executive or county commission.

Requests shall be submitted to the principal at least five (5) days prior to requested leave of absence.

MILITARY LEAVE (Policy 5.306)

Employees who are members of any reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States shall be granted leave of absence for all periods of military service during which they are engaged in the performance of duty or training in the service of the state or the United States. Reservists who anticipate military duty during the school year must give written notice to the director of schools, within thirty (30) days of the beginning of the school year, of the dates of the anticipated duty. While performing such duty or training, the employee shall be paid his/her regular salary up to a maximum of twenty (20) working days in any one (1) calendar year, plus such additional days as may result from any call to active state duty. An employee called to active duty by the governor to enforce the laws of the state shall be paid his/her regular salary for such time as he/she is engaged in the performance of his/her duty, and any time spent in active state duty shall not count against the twenty-day period of leave allowed for military service.

PRIVATE VEHICLES (Policy 3.404) and SPECIAL USE OF SCHOOL VEHICLES (Policy 3.402)

Rutherford County Policy 3.404 stipulates the conditions that must be met to allow an employee to transport students in the employee's private vehicle. Employees should not transport students in a private vehicle unless every stipulation is met. The Board specifically forbids any employee to transport students for school purposes without prior authorization by the Superintendent or designee.

Rutherford County Policy 3.402 states the Director of Schools shall recommend for board approval a list of Board-owned vehicles to be assigned to positions requiring full-time use. Such use shall be restricted to commuting to and from job-related sites and must comply with IRS requirements, including implications for reporting taxable income. Employees assigned full-time use of Board-owned vehicles shall be on call twenty-four (24) hours a day to perform services required by their job responsibilities. Other than commuting to and from work, use of these vehicles for personal use is prohibited.

CELLULAR PHONES (Policy 3.3001)

Rutherford County Policy 3.3001 outlines the conditions for the use of the system owned cellular phones during the school day. The instructional staff shall not use personal cellular phones during instructional time for personal use.

USE OF THE INTERNET/E-MAIL (Policies 4.406 and 1.805)

Rutherford County Policies 4.406 and 1.805 outline the conditions and stipulations for the use of the Internet and e-mail as a business tool. Before any employee is allowed use of the District's internet or intranet access, the employee shall sign a written agreement. All data including e-mail communications stored or transmitted on school system computers shall be monitored. Employees/students have no expectation of privacy with regard to such data. E-mail correspondence may be a public record under the public records law and may be subject to public inspection.

DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE (Policy 1.804 and Policy 5.403)

No employee shall unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess or use on or in the workplace alcohol or any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana or any other controlled substance, as defined in federal law. “Workplace” shall include any school building or any school premise; any school-owned or any other school-approved vehicle used to transport students to and from school or school activities; and off-school property during any school-sponsored or school-approved activity, event or function.

Policy 5.403 allows for Reasonable Suspicion Drug Testing if the following conditions exist: (list is not inclusive)

1. Observed use, possession or sale of illegal drugs and/or use, possession, sale, or abuse of alcohol and/or prescription drugs.
2. Apparent physical state of impairment of motor functions.
3. Marked changes in personal behavior not attributed to other factors.
4. Employee involvement in or contribution to an accident where the use of alcohol or drugs is reasonably suspected or employee involvement in a pattern of repetitive accidents whether or not they involve actual or potential injury.
5. Violation of criminal statutes involving the use of illegal drugs, alcohol or prescription drugs and/or violations of drug statutes.

TOBACCO AND VAPE-FREE SCHOOLS (Policy 1.803)

All uses of tobacco, electronic/battery operated devices, vapor products, and all other associated paraphernalia are prohibited in all of the school district’s buildings and in all vehicles that are owned, leased, or operated by the district. Smoking and vaping shall be prohibited on school grounds including, but not limited to, public seating areas, bleachers used for sporting events, or public restroom. Employees may not smoke or vape anywhere on school grounds, including in the employee’s car if on school property. Employees and students in the school district will not be permitted to use these products while they are participants in any class or activity in which they represent the school district.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT (Policy 6.409)

All personnel shall be alert for any evidence of child abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect. If personnel know or have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect, a report shall be filed immediately with the Child Abuse Coordinator at your school, the Department of Children's Services (DCS), and law enforcement. When alleged abuse involves someone employed by, previously employed by, or otherwise affiliated with the school, the report may be made directly to the DCS and law enforcement prior to notifying the Coordinator.

PURCHASING AUTHORITY (Policy 2.808)

Rutherford County Policy 2.808 states the procedures to follow to expend school or system funds. Reimbursements will not be made for individual purchases without the proper requisition.

EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION IN RECREATION OR FITNESS ACTIVITIES (Policy 5.6101)

System employees overseeing recreational and/or physical fitness activities which occur during the school day as a part of the educational curriculum (i.e. recess, physical education class, field day, field trips) are to oversee the activities and actions of the students in their care. Participation in these types of activities will be compensable under the Board's On the Job Injury Program.

Employees should not participate in recreational and/or physical fitness activities which are not during the school day and/or a part of the educational curriculum unless specifically approved by the principal. Participation in these types of activities is voluntary and accidents/injuries which result from such participation will not be compensable under the Board's On the Job Injury Program.

EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA (Policy 4.4061)

Rutherford County Schools respects the right of employees to use social media, networking sites, personal websites, and blogs, but it is important that an employee's personal use of these sites does not interfere with official duties, violate any district policies, or damage the reputation of the school district, its employees, its students, or their families.

Employees should set appropriate boundaries between personal and public online behavior, understanding that what is private in the digital world often has the potential of becoming public, even without their knowledge or consent. It is recommended that employees carefully review the privacy settings on any social media accounts and exercise good judgment when posting content and information on such sites.

Employees should adhere to the following guidelines consistent with the district's standards on harassment, student relationships, professional communication and confidentiality of student information. Those employees who use social networking sites for school or district purposes shall ensure those sites comply with all applicable laws, including open records and public forums laws.

1. Employees who have a presence on social networking websites are prohibited from posting data documents, photographs, or inappropriate information that is likely to create a material and substantial disruption of classroom activity.

2. Employees shall not use their personal social networking sites for school or district purposes. It is recommended that employees use dedicated, non-personal social networking accounts if they plan to use social media as a classroom or parent resource. Such accounts should be approved by the school principal or central office department head prior to creation.

3. Coaches, band directors, and other employees who need to use social media sites to communicate information about extracurricular clubs, teams, or other student groups should establish a dedicated, non-personal social networking account for such purposes with permission of the school principal.

4. Employees shall not disclose any confidential information obtained during the course of his/her employment about the school district, any school, individuals, or organizations, including students and/or their families.

5. The Board strongly discourages employees from socializing with students on social networking websites. The same relationship, exchange, interaction, information, or behavior that would be unacceptable in a non-technological medium is unacceptable when done through the use of technology. Employees are strongly discouraged from including current students as "friends," "followers," or any other similar terminology used by various sites without written permission from the student's parent.

6. The Communications Department, under the direction of the Director of Schools, will maintain the official social networking sites representing the school district. Other networking sites representing individual departments, schools, or employees must be approved by the department head and/or principal. The content of such networking sites shall be the responsibility of the department head or principal and the employee.

7. The specific social media platforms (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) permitted for use by Rutherford County Schools, individual schools, and employees, shall be determined in administrative procedure by the Director of Schools.

8. Employees shall ensure students featured on social networking sites have been authorized to do so by their parents, using the annual checklist parents completed during registration.

STUDENT EQUAL ACCESS (Policy 4.802)

Schools may allow students to form clubs or groups that meet before, during, and/or after the school day. Requests to form such clubs or groups shall not be denied based upon the religious nature or beliefs of proposed club or group. If permitted, school administrators shall ensure that all clubs and groups have the same abilities to access facilities and advertise their meetings.

No funds shall be expended by the school for any such meeting beyond the incidental costs associated with providing meeting space. Groups meeting under this policy may be required to pay a reasonable fee for compensating school personnel in the supervision of the activity.

No student may be compelled to attend or participate in a meeting under this policy. A student or a group of students who wish to conduct a meeting under this policy must file an application with the principal at least three (3) days prior to the proposed date. The principal shall approve the meeting if the principal determines that:

- The meeting is voluntary and student-initiated;
- There is no sponsorship of the meeting or its content by the school, the Board, or its employees;
- The meeting will not materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of the school's educational activities or conflict with other previously scheduled meetings;
- Employees of the district are to be present in a non-participatory monitoring capacity; however, no employee shall be required to attend in this capacity if the content of the meeting is contrary to the beliefs of the employee; and,
- Non-school persons will not direct, control or regularly attend.

SCHOOL SPONSORED EVENTS (Policy 4.802)

If the Board or a school principal authorizes an event at which a student is to speak, a limited public forum shall be established for such student speakers. The appropriate administrators shall ensure that:

- The forum is provided in a manner that does not discriminate against a student's voluntary expression of a religious viewpoint, if any, on an otherwise permissible subject;
- There is an appropriate method of selecting student speakers which is based on neutral criteria; and,
- Student speakers do not engage in speech that is obscene, vulgar, offensively lewd, indecent or promotes illegal drug use.

To the extent possible and practical, prior to events in which students will speak, notice shall be provided orally and/or in writing that the student's speech does not reflect the endorsement, sponsorship, position, or expression of the Board and its employees.

SAFETY TRAINING

All new employees are required to complete Safety Training within ninety (90) days of employment. Contact your immediate supervisor to access the web links for training. Training includes:

- Blood Borne Pathogens and Exposure Control,
- On the Job Injury,
- Hazardous Communication and Fire Prevention.

Other trainings may be substituted or added as deemed necessary by the school system. Training modules can be accessed from this link: Safety Training - Rutherford County, TN