

# EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT STAFF HANDBOOK

TALBOT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
EASTON, MARYLAND

*Revised July, 2007*

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## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Introduction**

This HANDBOOK includes brief descriptions of regulations, policies and procedures which govern the work of most educational personnel employed by Talbot County Public Schools. There are a number of positions in Talbot County Public Schools (TCPS) which are not included in this HANDBOOK and which may be governed by different policies, procedures and practices. These positions include, but are not limited to, certain administrative, supervisory, instructional and technical positions which have been approved by the Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools.

While the Board intends to make this HANDBOOK an easy to use reference document, it should be noted that it does not include all regulations, policies and procedures that may govern the work of all TCPS personnel. Specific questions related to issues not detailed herein should be addressed to either the Personnel Department or the Superintendent.

### **Appointment and Compensation of Public School Personnel**

The County Superintendent of Schools shall appoint educational support personnel, but the qualification of all certificated staff and their compensation and fringe benefits, except as may hereinafter be provided, shall be determined by the Talbot County Board of Education.

### **Transfer of Personnel Records**

No County Board of Education or County Superintendent or any person under their supervision or control shall transfer any employee personnel records to any third party unless requested in writing by the employee or under a court order.

### **Duties in General - Board of Education**

..."The County Board of Education shall determine, with the advice of the County Superintendent, the educational policies of the county school system and shall prescribe rules and

regulations for the conduct and management of the public schools in the said school system." (Public School Law.)

### **Management Clause**

Unless expressly provided otherwise in the Board Policy and Administrative Regulations Manual, Public School Laws and Regulations or a Negotiated Agreement, the Board reserves the right to:

- A. direct the work of its employees,
- B. hire, promote, demote, transfer, assign, and retain employees in positions within the school system,
- C. suspend or discharge employees,
- D. maintain the efficiency of the school operations,
- E. determine services to be rendered by the public schools,
- F. take actions as may be necessary to carry out the mission of the public schools,
- G. determine the methods, means, and personnel by which operations are to be carried out,
- H. be the policy making and governing body of the public schools,
- I. take any other action which is in the best interest of the public schools.
- J. no agreement is valid unless it is provided in writing and signed by the Superintendent or authorized designee.

The Board retains the authority to change, delete or add to any of the terms and/or information contained herein without notice.

Nothing contained herein shall be construed to deny or restrict the employer (Talbot County Public Schools) or employee such rights as they may have under the Public School Laws of Maryland and/or statutory laws as set forth in the latest edition of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

**PROCEDURE FOR RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINTS  
AND OTHER MATTERS OF CONCERN**

Employees will follow all written and verbal directives, even if such directives are allegedly in conflict with the provisions of this Handbook. Compliance with such directives will not in any way prejudice the employee's right to file a complaint within the time limits contained herein, nor shall compliance affect the ultimate resolution of the complaint.

When necessary, the interpretation of regulations, information and employee benefits as included in this handbook should first be discussed between the employee and their immediate supervisor.

If the matter has not been resolved at this point and requires additional administrative action, it is recommended that a written report be submitted to the Assistant Superintendent for Support Services; the designated administrator responsible for the Personnel Department. The employee, if he/she so desires, and the Principal, School Manager or department supervisor, may submit a written report.

The Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, may request a conference with the parties involved (individual or group), and review the documents provided. A decision, in writing, will be provided to the employee, School Manager, Supervisor, and the Superintendent of Schools.

The final resolution of a complaint rests with the Superintendent and the Board of Education.

## **WORK REGULATIONS**

### **Probationary and Permanent Employment Status**

New support employees shall serve a minimum six month probationary period. If at the end of the six month period, the employee's work is satisfactory in all categories, the individual is then eligible to be employed on a permanent basis. If the employee's evaluations are not satisfactory in all categories, then they may have their probationary period extended or their services shall be terminated, whichever is in the best interests of TCPS.

When a support employee is transferred from one group or classification to a new group or classification, involving a new job description, salary, and/or work responsibilities, the employee is automatically placed on probation, with a formal evaluation due at the end of six months. If the employee receives a satisfactory evaluation in all categories, then the assignment continues. In the event the evaluations are not completely satisfactory, the employee may be given an extended probationary period, or be transferred back to the same group or classification which he/she held prior to the original transfer (as soon as one becomes available), or may be terminated, whichever is in the best interests of TCPS.

\* Non-certificated employees may be moved from probationary status, but are not eligible to attain tenure.

### **Termination of Employment**

Under certain conditions it may be necessary for the Board of Education or a support employee to terminate his/her employment. Should this become necessary, whenever possible, the employee should give the Board of Education a minimum of two (2) weeks notice, in writing; likewise, the Board of Education will strive to give an employee a minimum of two (2) weeks notice, in writing. Non-certificated administrative employees should give a minimum of four (4) weeks notice.

### **Suspensions & Dismissals**

The Board of Education and/or the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee reserves the right to suspend, without pay, or dismiss any employee for immorality, misconduct, insubordination, incompetence, neglect of duty, or similar charges or problems with less than the usual notice.

## **Record of Attendance**

Employees shall maintain a record of their daily attendance in a manner approved by the Superintendent or designee. The record shall be maintained at the work site as directed by the Director of Finance and Payroll Office. The data reporting system shall be utilized to maintain accurate attendance records.

## **Notification in the Event of Absence**

WHEN IT IS NECESSARY TO BE ABSENT FOR ANY REASON, THE EMPLOYEE SHALL REPORT TO THEIR IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR OR THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT'S DESIGNEE. IF THE EMPLOYEE IS ABSENT CONTRARY TO THIS REGULATION, HE/SHE SHALL FORFEIT HIS/HER SALARY FOR THE TIME LOST AND INCUR SUCH DISCIPLINARY ACTION AS MAY BE DEEMED APPROPRIATE.

TCPS reserves the right to request a doctor's statement following any absence of one or more duty days.

In conjunction with the above paragraph, a supervisor or principal may require that a doctor's certificate be provided for an absence on a day immediately before or after a holiday.

## **Lost Time Not To Be Made Up**

No time lost by the employee, whether for illness or any other cause, shall be made up on Saturdays, on legal holidays, or in extra hours unless approved by the Superintendent or designee.

## **Smoking In School Buildings And On School Grounds**

Smoking on school property is illegal under state regulation and strictly prohibited. See TCPS Smoking Policy KGC for details.

## **Intoxicants and Drugs on School Premises**

Employees are prohibited from using intoxicants in any form on the school premises and from using illegal/or non prescribed drugs in any form on the school premises.

Employees are prohibited at all times from working while under the influence of intoxicants or illegal drugs. Employees are prohibited from the possession of intoxicants and illegal drugs in any form on school property.

Employees may be asked to be tested for drug or alcohol use if there is reason to suspect they have been used by the employee as described in the TCPS Drug-Free Work Place Policy GBEC.

VIOLATION OF ANY PART OF THIS SECTION IS NOT GOVERNED BY PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE AND MAY BE THE BASIS FOR IMMEDIATE DISMISSAL.

### **Outside Employment**

Outside employment shall not be considered a mitigating factor in an employee's substandard performance.

Any employee having more than one employer who, in the opinion of their, principal, department head, or supervisor, is not performing their required duties, regardless of the reason, shall be subject to supervisory counseling, disciplinary actions and/or termination, as deemed necessary and appropriate.

### **Fire Drill Procedure**

Fire regulations and public school laws require that fire drills be conducted in all public school buildings on a periodic basis. All personnel are to participate regularly in these drills. All alarms will be considered actual emergencies until staff is advised that the drill (or emergency) is over. Administrative, Maintenance, Custodial, Transportation and Food Service staff shall receive additional fire prevention training to prepare them for their responsibilities during fire and similar alarms.

### **Bulletin Boards and Inter-School Mail Service**

Building principals and School Managers shall make an effort to provide a bulletin board for displaying information that pertains to TCPS employees. All articles posted on the bulletin boards are subject to prior approval by the building Principal, Managers, Superintendent, or designee. Failure to acquire this approval may result in the removal of such materials. Any material distributed via the employee mail boxes requires prior approval per TCPS policy. Use of mail boxes by

private organizations is prohibited, unless specifically approved in advance by the Principal, Manager, Superintendent, or designee.

### **Use of E-Mail**

The following information is taken directly from Board Policy EK, USE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN SCHOOLS, as revised on September 18, 2002.

The Board of Education of Talbot County (the "Board") recognizes that e-mail is an efficient form of communication that may help school system administrators and staff to better perform their public duties. The use of e-mail, however, raises a number of issues concerning archival storage, privacy interests, and rights under the Maryland Public Information Act (the "PIA") and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"). The Board also recognizes the value of Internet research as well as the risks involved with Internet use that is inappropriate for a school or workplace setting.

This Policy is intended to address these issues and to provide guidance on the appropriate use of TCPS network communication facilities which provide e-mail messaging and access to the Internet.

- 1     Public Purpose. The Board provides computer hardware, software, Internet, and e-mail programs for the limited purpose of helping the Talbot County Public Schools' administrators and staff in the furtherance of their public duties. The use of e-mail or the Internet should be limited to this purpose. Board employees should refrain from using school system e-mail or the Internet for private purposes during business hours. Use for lobbying, commercial or illegal purposes is strictly prohibited.
  
- 2     No Expectation of Privacy. Board employees have no legitimate expectation of privacy in e-mail communications sent or received on school system computers or in any material obtained or sent over the Internet on school system computers. All e-mail communications and Internet files are subject to inspection without prior notice.
  
- 3     Public Information. E-mail communications sent or received on school system computers may be subject to

public disclosure pursuant to the provisions of the PIA. Accordingly, it is essential that school administrators and staff not send information via e-mail that they would not put on school system letterhead.

- 4     Student Information.     E-mails containing personally identifiable student information may be considered student records for purposes of FERPA. Accordingly, such e-mails should be kept to a minimum. In those limited circumstances where it becomes necessary to send an e-mail containing personally identifiable student information, it is important to make a paper copy of the e-mail and save it in the student's file.
  
- 5     Password Security.     Many systems provided by the Board need to be secure. Any system accessed via an account with a user login name and password is a system that needs to be secure. Accounts are to be accessed only by the account owner. Passwords are not to be shared with anyone. The account owner is responsible to keep his/her password information confidential.
  
- 6     E-mail Archives.     Most e-mail communications have no archival value. Therefore, most e-mail communications should not be saved or backed-up. Any e-mail communication that must be saved should be archived as soon as possible after it is sent or received. E-mail communications not archived will be deleted.
  
- 7     Inappropriate Material.     When e-mail communications from outside sources contain material such as jokes, greeting cards, defamatory statements, discriminatory statements, obscenities, or pornographic images, they should be deleted as soon as possible. These items should not be circulated to other administrators or staff or to persons outside the school system. Such material may only be saved or forwarded for the purpose of conducting a disciplinary investigation. Board employees must not, at any time, intentionally receive or distribute material on school system computers that is abusive, harassing, libelous, obscene, profane, pornographic, threatening, sexually explicit, or illegal or purports to speak for the Board or any employee of the Board. The Assistant Superintendent for Support Services or the Technology Manager should be advised when inappropriate materials

are received for assistance in the prevention of future occurrences.

- 8 Disruption of Systems. Board employees must not use or permit or enable others to use the Board's network resources to infiltrate, disrupt, or harm computer systems within or outside the Board's wide area network.
- 9 Disciplinary Action. Failure to abide by the terms of this Policy may result in disciplinary action which, in the discretion of the Superintendent and the Board, may include suspension or termination of employment in appropriate cases.

Please see the full TCPS policy document "EK" for additional details.

#### **Notary Public**

1. There is a need and a desire to have a Notary Public available in each public school building.
2. Any administrative secretary who has been employed by the Talbot County Public Schools for a minimum period of ONE year can complete a Notary Application and return same to the Talbot County Education Center for processing. The Board will pay the application fee and the cost of the Notary Seal.
3. It is further understood that no employee is compelled to submit an application, as it is voluntary.
4. Services performed in the school for all school personnel must be free of charge.

#### **Intent Forms**

Employees may request transfers or other assignments each year on intent forms on file in each school. Said forms shall be in duplicate, with the Personnel Office receiving the original and the employee retaining the second copy.

Transfer requests are not confidential and will be communicated to the appropriate Management Team Members and other supervisors.

Intent forms are not official notices of resignation, retirement or leave of absence requests. A separate, signed letter to the Superintendent or designee may be required to initiate action for these requests.

## **LEAVE PROVISIONS**

Talbot County  
Public Schools  
Easton, MD 21601

Policy Code  
GCBDA  
Adopted 05/22/91  
Revised 03/15/00

### **ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT STAFF ANNUAL LEAVE**

#### A. General Information

1. Annual leave applies to most, but not all, twelve (12) month employees. It does not apply to ten (10) and eleven (11) month employees
2. Annual leave is calculated on the basis of July 1 - June 30 employment, consistent with the school system's fiscal year.
3. The use of annual leave must be approved in advance by the employee's supervisor as applicable and the Superintendent or his designee on an approved leave form.

#### B. Administrative Staff

1. Twenty (20) annual leave days are available each year. (July 1 - June 30). The Board of Education encourages its employees to take this leave annually; however, twenty (20) days of annual leave may be carried over to the next duty year. The maximum number of annual and accumulated leave days shall be forty (40).
2. Annual leave must be approved in advance by the Superintendent or his designee.
3. Annual leave used between August 15 and September 15 should normally not be more than one day at a time.
4. Upon termination or retirement, any unused annual leave accrued the prior fiscal year shall be paid in full. All annual leave accrued during the fiscal year in which the administrative employee terminates his/her employment shall be paid on a pro-rated basis equal to the amount of time worked in their final

year. If more than the pro-rated maximum have already been used, the employee's final salary payment shall be reduced accordingly.

Example: Termination on September 30 is 25 per cent of the fiscal year and a maximum of 5 annual leave days (25% of 20 annual leave days) shall be payable. If the employee has already used 10 days, a payroll reduction of 5 days shall be made.

### C. Support Staff

1. Effective July 1, 1999, permanent twelve (12) month educational support personnel shall begin to accrue but not be eligible to use annual leave during their first fiscal year of employment. During this initial period of employment each employee is credited with a 1/2 day of annual leave for each full month of employment which may be used after July 1 following their date of employment.
2. Following the employee's first anniversary date of employment, each eligible employee is credited with one (1) day of annual leave for each full month of employment. These annual leave days shall be available for use during the next fiscal year of employment.
3. During the succeeding year of employment and each year thereafter, each eligible employee is credited with one and one-fourth (1-1/4) days of annual leave for each full month of employment. These annual leave days (maximum 15) shall be available for use during the next fiscal year of employment.
4. On July 1 following six (6), seven (7), eight (8), nine (9), and ten (10) years of employment, eligible twelve (12) month permanent employees shall receive an additional one (1) annual leave day for each year up to a maximum, grand total of twenty (20) days.
5. A maximum of ten (10) days of unused annual leave are automatically transferred to the succeeding year. Any annual leave in excess of ten (10) days not used during the current year (prior to June 30) is permanently eliminated and lost. Employees may request the Superintendent to grant a special

exception to transfer additional unused vacation days under special circumstances. Requests should be made in writing with a justification of need.

6. Creditable annual leave may be used by the employee prior to the termination or retirement date provided the Board receives a sixty (60) day prior notice from the employee. Any annual leave not used will be paid upon termination.

### **Miscellaneous Information**

#### **Annual Leave**

- A. Annual leave is calculated on the basis of July 1 - June 30 employment, consistent with the school system's fiscal year.
- B. The use of annual leave must be approved in advance by the employee's supervisor as applicable and the Superintendent or his/her designee on an approved leave form.

#### **Sick Leave**

- A. Permanent support personnel employed at least fifty percent (50%) of the normal duty day, defined as a minimum of 7 hours, exclusive of meal period, shall be entitled to the following prorated sick days yearly:

10 month employees	13 days
11 month employees	14 days
12 month employees	15 days
- B. All eligible support personnel shall be entitled to unlimited accumulation of sick leave.
- C. An employee must work at least 51% of duty days for any month partially employed in order to receive credit for that month.
- D. Eight (8) days of sick leave can be used for illness of a member of an employee's family (child, spouse, parent, in-laws, brother, sister, grandparent) and/or any person living regularly in the household of the employee. A Leave Request Form is required.

- E. Three (3) days of sick leave may be used each work year for personal business leave, if a request is submitted, in writing, via the "Leave Form", provided the matter cannot be conducted outside the normal duty day. Each request must be submitted forty-eight (48) hours in advance.
  - 1. If personal leave is of an emergency nature, then an exception to the 48 hour requirement is allowed, but must be requested verbally ahead of time with the employee's supervisor and then followed up with the proper form as soon as possible.
  - 2. Personal leave shall not be used for recreational purposes. Employees violating this policy are subject to suspension and/or termination.
  - 3. The reason and documentation for such leave may be required.
- F. For an approved personal business leave beyond those available, full pay will be lost.
- G. A female employee shall, at her request, be allowed to use sick leave for absence due to disability connected with or resulting from pregnancy, provided the disability date is verified by the employee's attending physician. Upon the termination of such disability, so verified by a physician, when requested by the employee or the Board, the employee must return to work. Requests for Maternity Leave of Absence are to be made in writing to the Superintendent or designee.
- H. Employees may use up to five (5) days of sick leave for the observance of religious holidays provided they give notice on the leave form by September 15th of each school year.

#### **Extended Leaves**

The Board may grant a leave of absence to any employee in the retirement system or pension system (Teachers or State Employees) without pay, without experience credit, and without any fringe benefits, if they have been employed for at least

twenty-five (25) months. Leaves can be granted for the following reasons:

A. Maternity

1. A leave for maternity shall apply to all eligible female employees employed by the Board of Education.
2. Any leave granted for maternity reasons shall require a verification certificate from the employee's attending physician.

B. Adoption of a child: Any request for leave shall be accompanied by adoption papers for the child. Any employee who has officially requested adoption leave shall be entitled to use up to four calendar weeks of available accumulated sick leave provided the employee has indicated the number of days he/she desires to use and they shall commence with the date the leave officially begins. In cases where both adopting parents are employees, such leave shall only be available to one employee. Personal leave and/or sick leave for a family member may also be used in conjunction with an adoption by either or both adopting employees.

C. Campaigning for or holding elective office

1. A request for leave must be verified by a filing fee receipt or a letter of appointment to elected office.

D. Illness or Injury

1. An employee, at the discretion of the school system, may be placed on unpaid leave for personal illness or injury following the exhaustion of accumulated sick leave or twelve (12) weeks, whichever comes first. An employee may request an unpaid leave extension as noted below.

E. Child Rearing

1. Any employee may apply for child rearing leave.
2. Any request for a leave shall be accompanied by legal guardianship, birth certificate or adoption papers.

The following general provisions shall apply to "Extended Leaves":

- A. An employee shall give a minimum of 30 days notice when requesting a leave under A, B, C and D, and as soon as possible when requesting a leave for personal illness. The request shall be in writing and submitted to the Superintendent of Schools. No leave of any type, paid or unpaid, can exceed a maximum of eighteen (18) months.
- B. The Board shall consider a request for an extension of leave by any employee who requests it in writing. The extension, if granted, can be for a maximum of six months, and such request should be submitted in writing 45 days prior to the termination date of the original leave.

The Retirement/Pension System allows an employee to purchase a maximum of twenty four (24) months credit for an approved leave of absence. The approved leaves include only the following; personal illness, maternity or adoption, study, eligible government service, eligible professional organization service, and active duty military service.

- C. No sick leave shall be in effect or creditable during the leave.
- D. Employees on leave may maintain their membership in the health and term life insurance plans and shall pay the full cost of the premium, consistent with Federal C.O.B.R.A. Regulations.
- E. The prerogative of purchasing retirement membership service credit may be exercised by the employee according to state retirement regulations. Forms should be completed before the leave is begun. The local coordinator shall assist the employee in completing the necessary form(s) when requested.
- F. All benefits to which employees were entitled at the time their leave commenced will be restored upon their return to active service.
- G. Employees who are granted a leave of absence shall provide a written request to return to active service

not later than 30 days prior to the end of the approved leave. If the written request to return is not received as indicated, the employee shall be automatically terminated at the end of the approved leave period.

- H. When an employee requests to return from leave, he/she will be assigned to the same type of position held at the time said leave commenced, if available. If the same type of position is not available, the employee will be assigned to a position for which he/she is determined to be qualified when it becomes available. The final determination shall be made by the Board of Education. If an employee on leave refuses an offered position, then the leave and the employee's employment status is terminated.
- I. Any request for a leave of absence for maternity or personal illness or injury must be verified by the attending physician, in a form and manner acceptable to the Board, attesting to the employee's inability to perform his/her duties and the date recommended for leave to commence. Forms are available in the Personnel Office. The Board shall make the final decision.
- J. Any leave granted for maternity reasons or personal illness or injury shall require a certificate from the employee's attending physician attesting to the employee's fitness to perform regular duties when there is an indication of a desire to return to active employment status.
- K. The Board may, at its discretion, require periodic medical reports and/or physicians' certificates during leaves, paid or unpaid, for maternity, personal illness or injury, disability, etc.
- L. All leaves and extensions granted by the Board of Education will be confirmed in writing with the employee and the Personnel Office receiving a copy for the employee's file.
- M. Professional and support employees are entitled to leaves as defined in Board Policy "G CBD" PROFESSIONAL AND SUPPORT STAFF LEAVES AND ABSENCES. All leaves requested or allowed for all leaves of any kind, including Worker's Compensation, shall be considered

and used to meet all or part of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) requirements.

### **Temporary Leaves**

Temporary leave shall apply to all eligible educational support employees except substitutes, other hourly paid employees, or other personnel not employed 50% of the normal duty day on an annual salaried basis.

#### **A. Bereavement Leave**

1. There will be no reduction in pay for a leave of absence of five (5) consecutive work days for the funeral, internment, and bereavement of a family member (child, parent, brother, sister, wife, husband, grandparent, grandchild, in laws) or anyone who is living regularly in the household of the employee at the time of the death. An employee will be allowed to use up to two (2) personal leave days, if available, and one (1) sick leave day, if available, for the purpose of bereavement leave for the death of an uncle, aunt, niece or nephew. The bereavement leave must be used within seven (7) days from the date of demise.
2. If an employee has personal leave available, they may, at their option, use one day in addition and in conjunction with the above, so long as the leave form is submitted upon return to duty, making a total of six working days.

#### **B. Court Summons**

1. When an employee is to be absent due to a court summons or subpoena, a copy of the summons or subpoena must be submitted to the School Manager or supervisor and then forwarded to the Payroll Office.
2. Salary Conditions
  - a. Witness for the Board - If an employee appears as a witness for the Board at a court hearing with or without a subpoena, no

deduction shall be made from the employee's salary.

- b. Subpoenaed Witness - If an employee appears in court in response to a subpoena to act as a witness for the State, no deduction shall be made from the employee's salary.
- c. Personal Court Summons or Witness For A Private Citizen - Any personal court appearance or court appearance as a volunteer witness for a private citizen shall be with no reductions in pay, provided the employee elects to use available personal leave. If personal leave is not available or not used, then the employee's salary shall be reduced on a per diem basis.

### C. Jury Duty

The Board of Education may grant a temporary leave of absence for jury duty to an educational support employee if the official request is made available to the responsible principal, supervisor, or administrator and is forwarded to the Finance office. The following provisions shall apply:

1. While on jury duty, an employee shall be paid the difference between his/her regular salary and the compensation he/she receives for jury service. An employee having served on a jury shall be required to endorse his/her check for jury service over to the Board, thereby keeping their regular salary in effect.
2. When personal expenses are included in the check, the amount shall be refunded to the employee by the Board if an accounting of these expenses by a court official accompanies the check.
3. When the employee returns from jury duty, he/she must present a verification from the court of the actual number of days served on jury duty.
4. Whenever the employee is temporarily excused from such jury duty by the court on a scheduled work day, he/she shall advise their principal or supervisor as promptly as possible and stand

ready to report for work if requested by the building principal or the supervisor.

5. An employee shall notify the building principal or supervisor at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance or as early as possible when he/she will be absent for jury duty.
6. In certain urgent circumstances, the Board MAY request that the employee be excused or exempt from such duty if the employee's services are considered essential at the time of the proposed jury duty. The employee shall make the Board aware that they have been requested to serve as soon as the court request is received by the employee by completing a leave request form.

## EMPLOYEE INSURANCE AND FRINGE BENEFITS

### Health and Major Medical Insurance

- A. A Health Insurance Program will be maintained through a duly licensed insurance company and/or health benefit trust and shall be made available to each full time, permanent employee and part time, permanent employee working a minimum of one half (1/2) time, defined as a minimum of four (4) hours per day, excluding a meal period. Such employees will be eligible for insurance when they have been permanently employed by the Board and have signified their intention to remain in the employ of the Board. The plans and premium cost sharing formulas described below are subject to change.
1. A Preferred Provider Network (PPN) Indemnity Program which includes a prescription, dental and major medical benefits.
  2. An Exclusive Provider Organization (EPO) Indemnity Program which includes a prescription, dental and major medical benefits.
- B. Premium Cost Sharing: Each employee shall pay **15 percent** of their contract and the Board shall pay the remaining 85 percent.
- C. Opt-Out Plan: Employees with medical benefits in force elsewhere may waive coverage and receive **\$900.00** payable in equal installments.

### Term Life Insurance

The Board agrees to maintain a term life insurance plan on the following basis and at no cost to its eligible employees.

- A. Full time, permanent employees and part time, permanent employees working a minimum of one half (1/2) time, defined as a minimum of four (4) hours per day, excluding a meal period, will be eligible for insurance when they have been employed by the Board and have signified their intention to remain in the employ of the Board.

- B. Subject to the terms of this plan, the amount of insurance on the life of each employee shall be equal to the amount of his/her salary rounded to the nearest thousand.
- C. Any insurance that may be issued under this plan shall terminate whenever the insured employee ceases to be an active employee in the Talbot County Public School System.
- D. This insurance may not be assigned to a debtor.
- E. In case of accidental death, there will be a double indemnity clause.

#### **Employees Eligible For Insurance**

All employees who are employed on a full time permanent basis, or at least half time permanent basis, (defined as a minimum of four (4) hours per day, excluding a meal period) and are under regular assignment and salary are eligible. Temporary, or substitute employees are not eligible. Some grant funded positions are also not eligible. Eligibility determinations are subject to change and shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent or designee.

#### **Retirement Information**

**SPECIAL NOTE:** State regulations establish retirement benefits. Please refer to your Maryland State Retirement/Pension Handbook for additional details.

## **SALARY INFORMATION**

### **Payroll Information**

Salaried employees shall be paid twice a month for twenty-four (24) pay periods by direct deposit to employee selected bank accounts.

Subtracted from the gross amount will be the following mandatory or **optional\*** deductions:

- A. Federal Income Tax
- B. Social Security
- C. Maryland Income Tax
- D. Retirement (if applicable)
- E. Court Ordered Wage Garnishment
- G. Court Ordered Child Support
- \*H. Cell Phone Charges
- \*I. Savings Bonds
- \*J. Tax Shelter Annuity
- \*K. Credit Union
- \*L. Health Insurance
- \*M. YMCA Annual Membership
- \*N. United Way Contributions
- \*O. Pickering Creek Environmental Center Membership
- \*Q. Union Dues

The payroll is normally distributed on the 15th day (or closest preceding working day) and the last working day of the month. Questions relative to payroll should be directed to the Finance Department at the Board of Education; (410) 822-0330.

### **Salary Adjustments**

Salary improvements incorporated within the pay scale, as approved by the Board of Education, are effective on July 1 of each fiscal year for twelve (12) month employees, August 1 for eleven (11) month employees and September 1 for ten (10) month employees, unless otherwise indicated in writing.

### **Hourly Employees**

Permanent part time (hourly) employees and bus drivers shall be paid at an hourly rate.

### **Military Experience**

All newly employed employees with military experience will be granted salary credit as follows:

- A. A one (1) step credit shall be given on the salary schedule for each twelve months on active duty. This credit shall be established on the following criteria:
  - 1. A Talbot County employee being inducted into the military can receive salary credit as provided by governing laws and regulations when, and if, reemployed, provided he/she makes application within ninety (90) days of their discharge.
  - 2. A person serving in the military prior to employment in Talbot County shall receive a maximum of one step credit on the salary schedule. Total combined salary step credit shall not exceed established maximums.
  - 3. To receive credit, the employee must have been honorably discharged.

### **Overtime Regulations**

Reminder: Approval from an Assistant Superintendent, as well as the School Manager or Supervisor, is required for all overtime unless it is of an emergency nature or paid by an outside organization.

- A. In schools where additional Support Staff help is required for evening activities, it may be necessary to consider overtime payment. If an employee is required to open a school for a PTA meeting, adult education classes, etc., and he has already been obligated to work a maximum forty (40) hour schedule for the week, he may be paid overtime at the rate of one and one half times his regular pay for these additional services, double time for Holidays and Sundays. Administrative effort should be made to schedule the use of employees for school related activities without requiring overtime duty.

Should this same person be employed to open the building for an outside agency and if such time is in excess of the hours listed above, the organization shall be charged at the overtime rate and any such money collected should be submitted to the Board of Education. (All salary paid is subject to payroll taxes by both employee and employer.)

For the purpose of calculating the maximum hours mentioned above, it will be necessary for each week to stand on its own. The usual work week shall begin at 12:01 a.m. (midnight) Sunday and ending 12:00 p.m. (midnight) Saturday evening.

- B. The School Manager or supervisor shall maintain for each employee a record of the number of hours worked each day or a coded duty day attendance record, if applicable. This record shall be maintained on a form furnished by the Board of Education. The School Manager or supervisor will forward this report to the Finance Office along with other appropriate forms for payroll purposes.
1. Overtime for any purpose must receive prior approval by the building principal or supervisor.
  2. The School Manager or supervisor shall obtain approval for all overtime via the personnel office, with the EXCEPTION of overtime approved for OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONAL USE and reimbursable to the school system, or emergency situations when approval is not applicable. The semi-monthly work record must include the reasons for overtime as posted on the time sheets.
  3. The Finance Department may be requested to prepare a monthly overtime report for the Senior Staff.
- C. Cafeteria Supervision - Any time the kitchen is used a representative of the cafeteria staff must be present on all occasions when school kitchens are open. An additional sum (wages) is to be paid to a cafeteria employee, based on the individual's actual wage per hour, subject to overtime regulations. The cafeteria worker normally works thirty (30) hours per week. When the cafeteria employee's total work hours go

beyond forty (40) hours, he/she shall be paid time and one half. Sundays shall be double time.

- D. Custodial Requirements - A custodian shall normally be compensated whenever a building is used and he is required to work overtime (assigned by the School Manager). Use of the building or grounds that requires normal custodial service during regular working days is not subject to charge. Custodial services on weekends, holidays, and in some cases, evening hours (beyond the forty (40) hour week) may be subject to time and one half pay or double time for Holidays and Sundays.

#### **Other Payroll Information**

Temporary Employees - Temporary (substitute) employees for support personnel employees shall not be employed unless requested by the School Manager and approved in advance by the Personnel Office. Their use shall be limited, and only for emergency situations.

#### **Extension of Duty Hours and Classification Assignment**

Part time employees shall not have their duty hours extended, nor should any employee be assigned duties in a different group or job classification. Any exception shall receive prior approval, in writing, of the Personnel Office and then, only for emergency reasons.

## **MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION**

### **Cafeteria Employees**

The Cafeteria Service is a completely self supporting program which requires separate and distinct financial policies, procedures and work schedules. These policies and procedures are described in a separate Cafeteria Service Handbook.

### **Transportation Employees**

The Transportation Department provides a non-instructional operational service which requires separate and distinct policies, procedures and work schedules. Its activities are also governed by state and federal transportation safety regulations. Transportation Department policies and procedures are described in the Transportation Staff Handbook and School Bus Driver Training Manual.

### **Worker's Compensation and Employer's Liability Insurance**

The Board of Education of Talbot County provides worker's compensation and employer's liability insurance for its employees in accordance with the Laws of the State of Maryland. The policy covers each employee to the extent required by the above mentioned laws. See Policy GBEA for the additional details.

Any claim for injuries submitted to the Worker's Compensation Board that was not filed as noted in Policy GBEA may be contested by the Board of Education's insurance provider(s).

### **Safety Information**

#### **A. Agencies Involved -**

A number of public and non public agencies have established rules and guidelines for the promotion of safety and student well being. The State Fire Marshal is primarily concerned with the elimination of fire hazards and the safe evacuation of the buildings in the event of fire or similar emergency. The local and State Health Departments are primarily concerned with health hazards, but also have jurisdiction over

certain safety hazards and air pollution. Insurance companies concern themselves with safety such as accident hazards and fire hazards and make inspections of school premises annually.

B. Fire Prevention -

One of the most important methods is good housekeeping. Rubbish and trash should never be allowed to accumulate. Gasoline, oil, paint, and other inflammable materials should not be stored in boiler rooms or anywhere except in a fireproof storage room. Electrical equipment must be kept clean and in good condition. Worn electrical cords should be replaced. Fuses are electric safety valves, and frequent "blowing" of fuses is an indication of trouble. Have the trouble fixed and never use heavier fuses. Fire extinguishers should be checked and refilled annually. If an extinguisher is used or shows signs of misuse, report it promptly. All employees should familiarize themselves with the emergency use of fire extinguishers. Additional fire safety training is provided on a regular basis for maintenance and custodial staff.

C. Building Evacuation -

**Always assume that an alarm is real until you are officially notified it is a drill.** The safe and speedy evacuation of a building is extremely important when an emergency arises. Do not wait; get everyone out of the building first -- then call the Fire Department. Only after these things have been done should you take whatever steps you have been trained to take to extinguish or contain the fire.

To provide speedy evacuation, corridors, stairways and exit doors must never be blocked. When security locking mechanisms are used on exterior doors at night (building empty), they must be removed before the pupils arrive in the morning. Doors that are hard to open should be reported so they can be repaired. Exit lights must be on any time the building is occupied. (This is the law.) Fire doors at stairways and in corridors must be closed at all times. Never block them open. The only exception to this is doors especially designed to close when fire occurs. Fire alarm systems should be tested regularly. A

malfunction of the fire alarm system should be reported immediately to the principal and/or supervisor. Automatic sprinkling systems should be tested twice a year.

D. Health Hazards -

One of the major concerns of all employees is building cleanliness. This is extremely important in rest rooms, cafeteria, and the drinking fountains. The Health Department requires that dishes be sanitized in 180 degree F. water. The removal of all food scraps and the proper storage of all food will do much to minimize problems with rodents and insects. In cold weather the prompt removal of ice and snow, together with the use of sand, will minimize slipping hazards.

E. Boiler Safety -

The most important safety items are a weekly check of the safety valve and the low water shutoff. Any oil leaks should be repaired or reported at once. Any malfunction of the boiler should be reported. If in doubt, shut down the boiler and call for assistance.

**Emergency Closings, Delayed Openings and Early Dismissals**

Emergency closings, usually due to weather conditions, are a frequent occurrence. Support employees are called upon to exercise good judgement in the performance of their responsibilities during emergencies. DUE TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE RESPONSIBILITIES, THE BOARD'S POLICY IS PROVIDED BELOW IN ITS ENTIRETY.



EMERGENCY CLOSINGS, DELAYED OPENINGS AND EARLY DISMISSALS

I. Notice of Early Dismissal

- A. In the event of early dismissal, radio and television stations in Easton, Cambridge, Salisbury and Baltimore, local Police Departments, and other agencies and organizations are given information regarding the time when the schools will close for students.
- B. All schools are notified using a chain telephone relay system and the INFOSTAR messaging service will immediately be updated with the appropriate information.

II. Use of Telephones

In connection with the release of emergency instructions and messages, especially in the case of the emergency closing of schools, telephones will not be used except for the most urgent calls.

III. Schools Closed to Students

- A. When schools will be closed for students, all area radio stations, local Police Departments, *INFOSTAR* messaging service and other predetermined agencies and organizations will be informed.
- B. This announcement will be released no later than 6:00 a.m.

IV. Inclement Weather – Delayed Openings or Closed All Day

Snow, ice or fog may cause schools to have a delayed opening or be closed all day by the Superintendent. The INFOSTAR messaging service will immediately be updated with the appropriate information. In addition, radio stations WBAL, Baltimore; WCAO, Baltimore; WCBM, Baltimore; WBEY, Grasonville; WCTD, Federalsburg; WBOC-TV, WSBY, Salisbury;

WCEI, Easton; WCEM, Cambridge; WSOL, Salisbury; WAAI, Hurlock; and WKDI, Denton; will normally announce the delayed opening or closing of school starting at approximately 6:00 a.m. Website links are available at [talbotschools.org](http://talbotschools.org).

V. Procedures to be followed by Staff

If schools have a delayed opening, are closed all day (in which case a public announcement is made before schools are scheduled to open in the morning) or if students are dismissed early, the following personnel procedures are to be followed:

- A. Teachers: Teachers are to report to work in the manner dictated by the procedures contained in the WORKING CONDITIONS Article of the Negotiated Agreement.
- B. Twelve Month Employees: Twelve (12) month employees are always expected to report to work as normally scheduled on days when students are not in attendance, unless otherwise notified.
- C. Delayed Openings and Early Dismissals: All other (non-teacher) educational staff members, secretaries, clerks and cafeteria employees that are defined as ten (10) or eleven (11) month employees are required to report to and remain at work, unless otherwise notified.
- D. Delayed Openings Followed by School Closing: Instructional Assistants who have reported for and are at work when schools are closed following a delayed opening shall be excused for the remainder of the day. These employees shall be provided two (2) hours of compensatory leave time to be taken within the next pay period. School Managers are responsible for administering the leave(s) and maintaining accurate records.
- E. Schools Closed All Day: All other (non-teacher) educational staff members, secretaries, clerks, and cafeteria employees that are defined as ten (10) or eleven (11) month employees are NOT REQUIRED to report to work, unless otherwise notified.

- F. Liberal Leave: No twelve (12) month employee is required to report to, or remain, at work if they believe that their personal safety is being compromised; however, in the circumstances described above, the individual twelve (12) month employee is required to take available personal, annual, or unpaid leave. This is also applicable for any day declared a "State of Emergency" by the Governor. Employees who elect to take leave as described above will submit a Leave Form upon their return to work.

SPECIAL NOTE: It is NOT APPROPRIATE to take sick leave unless an employee experiences a medical condition covered by the sick leave policy. Should an employee determine not to take leave and not report to work, the payroll department will be directed to deduct a per diem amount.

- G. Work Day: On days of inclement weather, when students do not attend school, the length of the work day may vary slightly at the discretion of the individual School Manager. In order for an employee to be counted in attendance, the workday should be no less than 80% of their normal workday or scheduled hours.
- H. School Managers: School Managers are responsible for the maintenance and processing of accurate attendance records.

## VI. Duties of Administrators, Supervisors and Head Custodians

- A. Administrators and Supervisors: If schools have a delayed opening, are closed early or are closed all day, Principals, School Managers and other administrators with comparable responsibilities are expected to report to work as described above. They are also expected to direct the activities of custodians, and other twelve (12) month employees, and are expected to know at all times the condition of their buildings and the whereabouts of personnel assigned to them so that appropriate action can be taken as needed.
- B. Head Custodians: Head Custodians (or their alternates) are expected to contact their School Manager, Principal and Plant Operations Supervisor in accordance with pre-arranged plans and report on building conditions and may receive special

instructions as necessary. Particular care should be taken to make certain that school administrators are able to make contact with the custodians and Plant Operations staff by telephone or other means.

- C. Communication: It is the responsibility of School Managers, Principals, supervisors and administrators with comparable responsibilities to convey these instructions and procedures to all persons they supervise.

#### VII. Other Activities

When school is closed all activity scheduled in the building is cancelled. If the sponsoring individual or group wishes to hold its activity even though the building is closed, the Superintendent shall be contacted for approval.

#### VIII. Cooperation of Parents

Principals and other staff members can assist in the application of these procedures by making appropriate information available to parents. Parents should be advised that they have the ultimate responsibility for protecting the health of their children and must always decide whether a child's health will be endangered by sending him/her to school. Children who are absent because of health reasons or seriously inclement weather must be marked "absent" but such absences may be excused, depending upon the circumstances of each case.

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#### **Free Tuition for Children of Support Personnel**

The Board of Education may waive tuition charges for any educational support personnel who wishes to send his/her child of legal custody to the Talbot County Schools during the period of legitimate employment, provided the employee remains in good standing and the child remains in good academic standing and adheres to all rules and regulations adopted by the schools or policies adopted by the Board of Education. However, when in the interest of the other students within the Talbot County Schools or educational plans of the

Superintendent or Board it is necessary to return the child to his/her regular school, such shall be done with due haste.

### **Compensatory Time**

Talbot County Public Schools neither supports nor permits the use of "compensatory (comp) time" for its employees. Salary and compensation procedures are managed by the Director of Finance and must adhere to applicable State and Federal regulations. Non-exempt employees who work in excess of an average of forty (40) hours per week over the course of the established bi-monthly pay period are entitled to, and shall be paid, overtime. All overtime pay shall be approved in advance by the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent. Schedules within the same pay period should be adjusted to eliminate the need to work overtime and to accommodate the needs of the school system. Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime and shall develop their work schedules in order to accommodate the needs of the school system while not accumulating compensatory time. Exempt employees shall have their schedules, and subsequent changes thereto, approved by their immediate supervisor and submitted to the Personnel Office for documentation.

## **GROUP, CLASSIFICATION, AND SALARY INFORMATION**

### **School Based Secretaries**

School based secretaries and clerks shall consider seven (7) hours to be a normal full time duty day, exclusive of a thirty (30) minute lunch period.

### **Central Office Administrative Assistants, Receptionists & Secretaries**

Central Office Employees shall consider seven (7) hours to be a normal full time duty day, exclusive of a sixty (60) minute lunch period.

### **Computer Technicians**

Computer Technicians shall consider seven and one half (7.5) hours to be a normal full time duty day, exclusive of a thirty (30) minute lunch period.

### **Plant Operations Department**

Eight (8) hours shall constitute a normal full time duty day exclusive of a thirty (30) minute lunch period, with the following exception:

Custodians working on the evening shift shall consider seven and one half (7-1/2) hours to be a full time duty shift, exclusive of a thirty (30) minute meal period.

### **Instructional and Personal Assistants**

Each work day for full-time instructional assistants is 7 hours and 30 minutes in length, including a 30 minute lunch period. These hours will be scheduled at the discretion of the School Manager or Principal according to the needs of each particular building. Each work day for full-time personal assistants is 7 hours in length, excluding a 30 minute lunch period. These hours will be scheduled at the discretion of the School Manager or Principal according to the needs of each particular building. In the event of a reduction in force, all instructional and

personal assistants will be reviewed for termination based on a combination of factors including years of experience, performance evaluations, academic preparation, attendance and recommendations from School Managers, supervisors and principals.

Instructional and personal assistants may be assigned to monitor a classroom but will not be used as a substitute teacher in the classroom for extended periods of time.

Due to the inconsistent funding levels and the constantly changing student enrollments, the need for instructional and personal assistants is subject to constant change. As a result, these employees are subject to transfers or lay-offs.

Personal assistants work a 180 day year and are paid at the same flat hourly rate as established by the Board.

#### **Food Service Department**

The number of duty days and hours per day shall be assigned by the Food Service Manager. Please refer to the Food Service Staff Handbook for additional details specific to Food Service staff only.

#### **Transportation Department**

The number of duty days and hours per day shall be assigned by the Transportation & Safety Manager. Please refer to the Transportation Staff Handbook for additional details specific to the Transportation staff only.

## **EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT STAFF SALARY PLAN**

The approved salary program includes the following components:

1. Positions within the school district are compared to similar positions in area school systems and businesses to assure "external equity".
2. Positions are compared to similar positions within the school district to assure "internal equity" and avoid "salary compression" between employees in the same position. Factors in this review may include but are not limited to:
  - a. Number of years in the same position
  - b. Length of work year
  - c. Working conditions
  - d. Scope of involvement with other staff
  - e. Physical demands and risk factors
  - f. Level of interaction with general public
  - g. Extent of involvement with budgetary and fiscal affairs
  - h. Impact of employee absence
  - i. Level of initiative and ingenuity required
  - j. Mental or visual demands
  - k. Responsibility for equipment and materials
  - l. Responsibility for the safety of others
  - m. Responsibility for the work of others
  - n. Exposure to unavoidable hazards
  - o. Complexity of duties
  - p. Scope and character of supervision

3. Pay scales generally include twenty (20) steps for each grade. Once an employee is hired they will move up a step each year until they reach the maximum, subject to funding availability. All scales are subject to change without notice.
4. The Assistant Superintendent for Support Services is responsible for placement of newly hired employees on the appropriate salary step for their position's pay grade.
5. Newly hired employees will be placed on steps one (1) through ten (10) based upon a combination of market factors, education and experience. Special note: Prior experience is not credited on a "one year equals one step" basis.
6. New employees cannot be hired beyond step 10 of their pay grade without approval of the Superintendent.
7. The Assistant Superintendent for Support Services is responsible for recommending additions, deletions and/or changes to the Support Staff Salary Program as well as specific changes to position pay grades and salary steps. The Superintendent shall make a final determination.
8. Temporary substitute and/or "floater" employees will continue to be paid on per diem or per hour basis at a flat rate established by the Personnel Department.
9. Salary data are subject to change and available from the Finance or Personnel Departments upon request.