

General information, benefits,  
policies, and guidelines

KNOX COUNTY SCHOOLS  
**EMPLOYEE**  
**HANDBOOK**



[www.knoxschools.org](http://www.knoxschools.org)

**"Excellence for All Children"**

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

In the event of a discrepancy between any of the information contained in our orientation materials, the Employee Handbook and the Knox County Schools (“KCS”) Board Policy, the KCS Board Policy will govern. The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that will help with questions and pave the way for a successful career with the KCS. Suggestions for additions and improvements to this handbook are welcome and may be sent to the Human Resources Department. Any revised Employee Handbook supersedes and replaces all prior versions. Revisions will be posted on the Knox County Schools website and employees are responsible for becoming familiar with those revisions.

This handbook is neither an employment contract nor a substitute for the official KCS Board Policy; rather, it is a guide to and brief explanation of these policies. The handbook is not intended to alter the at-will status of employees in any way. The rights and responsibilities of the Knox County Schools’ employees may be found in Section G, “Human Resources – Staff Rights and Responsibilities.”

**Board policies and procedures can change at any time.** For more information, employees may refer to the policy codes that are associated with handbook topics, confer with their supervisor, or call the appropriate Central Office department. It is the employee’s responsibility to be knowledgeable of and adhere to all Board Policies and Procedures, including those not referenced herein. Updated versions of the **KCS Board Policy Manual** can be found at: <http://www.knoxschools.org/Page/2107>

# **EMPLOYMENT AND HIRING PRACTICES**

## **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

Opportunity for employment, as well as continuation and advancement in employment, shall be afforded equally to members of all races, creeds, colors, genders, religions, ages, national origins, and individuals with disabilities or veteran status without regard to any protected genetic information. All employment and advancement decisions will be made only with regard to qualifications for the positions involved. Policy G-290.

## **JOB POSTINGS AND APPLICATION**

All positions for the Knox County Schools will be advertised on-line at <http://knoxschools.org/Domain/1034>

The application process requires an online application submitted through SearchSoft at the following link: [https://kcs.searchsoft.net/ats/app\\_login?COMPANY\\_ID=00009960](https://kcs.searchsoft.net/ats/app_login?COMPANY_ID=00009960). Existing, *regular* (not temporary or interim) employees who wish to transfer to a new position are required to use the SearchSoft transfer application. External candidates and KCS employees who are *not* in regular positions must submit a new application for the desired job posting. For additional questions and clarification, please contact the Human Resources Department.

## **CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECK**

Knowingly falsifying information shall be sufficient grounds for termination of employment and shall also constitute a Class A misdemeanor. In a continuing effort to further the safety and welfare of students and staff, the KCS shall require criminal history records checks for all employees. Information shall be verified by fingerprint and criminal history records check conducted by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation or other sources as needed. Any costs incurred in conducting such investigations shall be paid by the applicant. Policy G-290. Knox County Schools will not accept screening results from any other school system.

## **OVERTIME AUTHORIZATION AND PAY**

The KCS complies with Wage and Labor Regulations as administered by the U. S. Department of Labor. Actual hours worked are to be reported by each employee. No employee shall be at the job location before or after contracted work schedule unless directed and approved by the immediate supervisor.

For *Classified* employees, overtime is defined as hours actually worked in excess of forty (40) hours per week. When an employee is requested to work over regularly scheduled hours, the following shall apply:

- Hours worked over the scheduled hours must be approved in advanced by the immediate supervisor.
- Whenever possible, compensatory time off shall be used in preference to overtime pay.
- All payment for overtime shall be processed through the payroll office.

If it is determined by the immediate supervisor that compensatory time cannot be granted without severe disruption of the operation of the facility, overtime may be authorized and paid at time and one-half (1.5) for all hours physically worked in excess of forty (40) in a week. Payment for overtime will be included in the paycheck for the period immediately following the one in which it was earned. Policy G-571.

## **PERSONNEL RECORDS**

Upon being selected and approved for employment with the Knox County Schools, a personnel file is established.

Employee records (except medical records, college transcripts, fingerprint background checks and other security check information such as personal phone numbers and addresses) are **public records**. As such, any individual or agency including the news media may request access to a personnel file. However, a record of the person inspecting the file and the date of inspection shall be kept and the employee shall be notified of the request. In addition, employees may request to observe the review of his or her personnel file by the requester.

Employees may view the contents of his or her personnel file which contains information pertaining to evaluations and other employment matters related to work history with Knox County Schools by making an appointment with Human Resources. If an employee wants to receive a copy of his or her records, there is a nominal fee per page copied. Policy G-180.

## **PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS**

All classified employees, including Central Office employees, must be evaluated as described in Policy G-510. For current employees in their first year of employment or who may require an extended leave and are unavailable to work at least 120 days in a school year, the supervisor has the option to choose to evaluate or not to evaluate the classified employee. All classified employees will be evaluated using the appropriate Knox County schools Online School-based Classified Evaluation Instruments.

Annual evaluations are mandated by Tennessee's First to the Top law for all teachers and other school-based certified employees. Please visit <http://knoxschools.org/Page/2265> for more information regarding the TEAM framework. Certified employees working 120 days in a school year, must be evaluated.

Evaluations shall be used to inform employees of their performance, as an aid in improving performance, and as a basis for making decisions regarding continuing employment. Evaluation reports shall be discussed with the evaluated employee.

Each employee shall be given access to an online copy of the evaluation and shall sign electronically the supervisor's copy as evidence it has been discussed. A copy of the Evaluation Forms may be found on the Knox County Schools Website [www.knoxschools.org](http://www.knoxschools.org). G-350 and G-510.

**Progressive Discipline.** KCS generally follows a progressive discipline model and requires due process when dealing with issues of unsatisfactory employee performance. It is the expectation of each KCS employee to maintain the highest standards of personal conduct, integrity, and performance, and it is the goal of KCS to be fair and consistent with disciplinary issues of employees based upon well-established guidelines, procedures and policies.

The steps involved include the following:

1. **Oral Discussion/Verbal Warning-** This is an informal conference during which there is initial discussion of behavior that does not meet performance standards.
2. **Professional Communication Record – (Form HR 149)** A professional communication record is intended to counsel and advise employees of best practices. The PCR documents issues discussed and follow-up/expectations going forward.
3. **Conference of Concern -** This is a formal conference documented in writing and may be placed in the employee's personnel file. The behavior that is to be corrected is clearly identified during the conference and in writing. Follow-up expectations are included in the written document that is signed by the administrator, employee, and witness.
4. **Written Reprimand-** This serves as a written sanction and admonishment of the employee and is placed in the employee's personnel file. A written reprimand may be given when the performance issue(s) persists after one or more conferences of concern has been issued and reasonable time to improve has been provided. However, if a first offense procedure violation is sufficiently severe to warrant it, a written reprimand may be issued.
5. **Suspension/Demotion-** Due to an employee's continued disregard of prior notifications or due to the severity of the performance/behavior issue, punitive action may be taken by the Superintendent. Only the Superintendent may choose to suspend an employee with or without pay or demote an employee.
6. **Dismissal-** Termination is the final action and typically taken after other options have been exhausted and the employee has been given due process. Only the Superintendent may dismiss an employee.

Please note that depending upon degree and severity of employee misconduct or policy violation, he or she may be immediately recommended for punitive action, up to and including dismissal, at the discretion of the Superintendent.



# KEY PERSONNEL STANDARDS AND POLICIES

## CODE OF CONDUCT

**Disclosure of personal interest in voting matters.** An official or employee with the responsibility to vote on a measure shall disclose during the meeting and before the vote, any personal interest that affects or that would lead a reasonable person to infer that it affects the official's or employee's vote. This disclosure shall be recorded in the minutes. In addition, the official or employee may, to the extent allowed by law, recuse himself or herself from voting on the measure. Policy B-220.

**Disclosure of personal interest in non-voting matters.** An official or employee who must exercise discretion relative to any matter other than casting a vote and who has a personal interest in the matter that affects or that would lead a reasonable person to infer that it affects the exercise of the discretion shall disclose, before the exercise of the discretion when possible, the interest on an official disclosure form and file the disclosure form with the school district's central office. In addition, the official or employee may, to the extent allowed by law, recuse himself or herself from the exercise of discretion in the matter. Policy B-220.

**Acceptance of gifts and other things of value.** An official or employee, or an official's or employee's spouse or child living in the same household, may not accept, directly or indirectly, any gift, money, gratuity, or other consideration or favor of any kind from anyone other than the school district that a reasonable person would understand was intended to influence the vote, official action or judgment of the official or employee in executing decision-making authority affecting the school district.

It shall not be considered a violation of this policy for an official or employee to receive entertainment, food, refreshments, meals, health screenings, amenities, foodstuffs, or beverages that are provided in connection with a conference sponsored by an established or recognized statewide association of school board officials or by an umbrella or affiliate organization of such statewide association of school board officials. Policy B-220.

**Misuse of public position.** No public officer or county employee shall corruptly use or attempt to use his or her official position or any property or resource which may be within his or her trust, or perform his or her official duties, to secure a special privilege, benefit or exemption for himself, herself or others. Policy B-220.

**Use of government property.** No public official or employee shall make use of the facilities, equipment, personnel, or supplies of the Knox County Schools for private use or gain except to the extent that the use is incidental or minimal or is lawfully available to the general public. Policy B-220.

**Ethics Complaints.** The *Ethics Committee* consisting of three members who will be appointed to one-year terms by the Chair of the Board of Education with confirmation by the full Board will review all ethics complaints. At least two members of the committee shall be members of the Board of Education.

Questions and complaints regarding violations of this Code of Ethics or of any violation of state law governing ethical conduct should be directed to the Chair of the Ethics Committee. Complaints shall be in writing and signed under oath by the person making the complaint, and shall set forth in reasonable detail the facts upon which the complaint is based.

The interpretation that a reasonable person in the circumstances would apply shall be used in interpreting and enforcing this Code of Ethics. When a violation of this Code of Ethics also constitutes a violation of a personnel policy or a civil service policy, the violation shall be dealt with as a violation of the policy or procedure rather than as a violation of this Code of Ethics. Any complaint brought pursuant to this policy must be filed with the Ethics Committee within one year of the alleged ethics code violation. Policy B-220.

## **COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

Employees have a right to express their views on any issue, but must in each case make clear that the view expressed is not the official view of the KCS.

Employees may, on their own time, campaign for or against any candidate or referendum, but they shall not use their classroom or system position as a political forum nor engage in any political promotion or solicitation during school hours.

If a *Certified* employee seeks an elective public office or appointment, and if serving in such elected office or appointment shall infringe upon his or her contractual agreement with the KCS, the employee shall present a proposed solution to the KCS Board of Education for consideration. The essential element to be determined is whether the activities proposed by the employee are consistent with his or her services to the school system and the best interests of education. *Classified* employees must complete a similar process with the Superintendent or designee making the final determination. Policies G-150 and G-580.

## **COMPLAINTS, GRIEVANCES, HARASSMENT, EVALUATION GRIEVANCES**

A complaint is a request for remedy or redress of a situation brought by an employee in regard to Board policy and any instances which do not meet the definition of a “grievance.” A grievance is a request for the remedy or redress of a situation brought by an employee for which state or federal statute or regulation supplies a means of addressing the same with the employee’s employer through a formal grievance process. Policy G-130.

**Complaints.** The Board of Education believes that disagreements arising in the course of employment should be resolved as quickly as possible and at the lowest supervisory level.

In instances of questions by an individual staff member concerning the adherence to policies and procedures, administrative practices within his or her particular school, and relationships with other employees, the staff member concerned must consult the administrative or supervisory personnel to whom he or she reports. If a satisfactory resolution of the problem cannot be reached after ample opportunity for consideration of the matter, the staff member concerned may discuss the matter with the next level of supervision up to and including the Director of Schools. In instances where an individual staff member feels he or she cannot discuss a problem with an immediate superior, the staff member may take the problem to the next level of supervision. Should it become necessary, the Director of Schools may review a complaint and take action and within a prompt, reasonable time shall notify all parties concerned of any decisions made regarding the complaint.

**Grievances.** Grievances concerning employment statutes related to harassment, equal employment opportunity, or medical accommodations should be addressed as provided for in Board Policies C-190 (Civil Rights Related Complaints) and G-220 (Harassment of Employees).

**Harassment.** The Knox County Schools do not discriminate in its programs or employment practices nor does it tolerate harassment for any reason including, but not limited to, harassment on the basis of age, actual or preferred gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, religion, race, color, genetics, veteran status or any other federally-identified protected area. Harassment by any employee will not be tolerated.

Victims of harassment should report these conditions to the appropriate school administrator, the Chief Human Resources Officer, or the Office of the Superintendent. No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith reporting of charges of harassment and effort will be made to maintain confidentiality.

Any employee found to have engaged in harassment shall be subject to sanctions, including, but not limited to, warning, suspension, or termination. Policy G-220.

**Evaluation Grievances.** Through the evaluation grievance procedure, principals, teachers, and other school-based certified positions may challenge the following, relative to their evaluation

1. Accuracy of the data
2. Adherence to the evaluation policies adopted by the State Board of Education



Minor procedural errors in implementing the evaluation model shall be resolved at the lowest possible step in the grievance procedure but shall not constitute grounds for challenging the final results of an evaluation. Minor procedural errors shall be defined as errors that do not materially affect or compromise the integrity of the evaluation results.

Teachers or principals may submit a grievance regarding the accuracy of performance evaluation data and/or the adherence to the performance evaluation policies adopted by the State Board of Education. Any grievance of this nature shall be addressed as provided for in a procedure developed by the Director of Schools which will comport with regulatory guidance adopted by the State Board of Education establishing the local board of education as the final appeal authority in this matter.

The Board of Education shall serve as the final step for all grievances. Policy G-130; Procedure G-130.

## **USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

The District's technology resources will be used only for learning, teaching, and administrative purposes consistent with the District's mission and goals. Commercial use of the District's system is strictly prohibited. Other issues applicable to acceptable use include:

- 1) Copyright. All users are expected to follow existing copyright laws, copies of which may be found in each campus library.
- 2) Supervision and permission. Student use of computer and/or the computer network is only allowed when supervised or granted permission by a staff member.
- 3) Identity theft. Attempting to log on or logging on to a computer or e-mail system by using another's password is prohibited. Assisting others in violating this procedure by sharing information or passwords is prohibited.
- 4) Improper use of any computer or the network is prohibited. This includes the following:
  - a) Use of racist, profane, or obscene language or materials
  - b) Using the network for financial gain, political or commercial activity
  - c) Attempting to or harming equipment, materials or data
  - d) Attempting to or sending anonymous messages of any kind
  - e) Using the network to access inappropriate material
  - f) Knowingly placing a computer virus on a computer or the network
  - g) Using the network to provide addresses or other personal information that others may use inappropriately
  - h) Accessing of information resources, files, and documents of another user or a student without permission

Electronic mail (e-mail) is a widely used technology resource that is available to employees as directed by his or her supervisor. General guidelines for email use include the following:

- 1) District email accounts should be used for all official email communication. Please avoid using personal email accounts for work-related purposes or work email accounts for personal use.
- 2) Security Responsibilities.
  - a) Usernames and passwords should be protected from unauthorized use at all times. Do not post any of this information where it may be viewed by others.
  - b) Usernames and passwords shall not be shared among staff members or with students.
  - c) Passwords shall never be shared via e-mail. All legitimate requests for this type of information must be requested in person.
- 3) Consequences of Improper Use. The District may suspend or revoke a system user's access to the District's system upon violation of policy and/or administrative regulations regarding acceptable use. Termination of an employee's account will be effective on the date the principal or department head receives notice of user withdrawal or of revocation of system privileges, or on a future date if so specified. Improper or unethical use may also result in disciplinary actions consistent with existing Board of Education policies or procedures and, if appropriate, other local, state or federal laws. This may also require restitution for costs associated with system restoration, hardware, and software costs.
- 4) Confidentiality. The software and hardware that provides e-mail capabilities to Knox County Schools' employees have been publicly funded. For that reason, it should not be considered a private, personal form of communication. The contents of any communication of this type are public records. The District would have to abide and cooperate with any legal request to access e-mail contents. As such, requests for personal information on students or staff members shall never be honored via e-mail. It is critical for a personal contact to be made with any individual requesting personal information. This relates particularly to any requests for student grades, discipline, attendance or related information. In addition, security information such as usernames or passwords should not be sent via e-mail for any reason.
- 5) Network Etiquette. System users are expected to observe the following network etiquette (sometimes known as "netiquette"):
  - a) Be polite and use appropriate language: swearing, vulgarity, ethnic or racial slurs, and any other inflammatory or offensive language is prohibited.
  - b) Pretending to be someone else when sending/receiving messages is prohibited.
  - c) Transmitting obscene messages, pictures or videos is prohibited.
  - d) Revealing such personal information as addresses or phone numbers of users or others is prohibited.
- 6) Unsolicited E-mail. The Technology department should be notified if a user receives unsolicited e-mail, particularly if it is of a "hate mail" or fraudulent nature. Every attempt will be made to track down the source of the e-mail and steps will be taken to attempt to prevent

the user from receiving additional unsolicited e-mail.

*Procedures I-220-1 through I-220-5*

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

KCS employees shall not engage in, or have a financial interest in, any activity that raises a reasonable question of conflict of interest with their duties and responsibilities as members of the school staff. This includes but is not limited to the following:

- School employees may not purchase any goods or equipment for sale to students or render any service to the school system on a commission basis;
- Employees who have patented or copyrighted any device, publication, or other item shall not receive royalties for use of such item in the school system;
- Employees may not engage in any type of work where the source of information concerning a customer, client, or employer originates from information obtained through the school system;
- The Board of Education may not purchase supplies, materials, or equipment from a school system employee; and
- Employees shall not sell instructional supplies, equipment and reference books in a territory that includes the parents of the children of the school in which the employee is assigned. *Policy G-160*

Moreover, the Superintendent, members of the Board of Education, administrative, supervisory, or teaching personnel or other school officer shall have no financial interest, directly or indirectly, in supplying books, maps, school furniture, or apparatus or other compensated services for the schools or to act as agent for any author, publisher, bookseller, or dealer in school furniture or apparatus. *Policy C-170.*

## DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE

Please see fully-detailed [Policy G-210](#).

The Knox County Board of Education and its employees share a commitment to create and maintain a drug-free workplace. The Knox County Board of Education is responsible for the instruction and well-being of the students entrusted to its care. *The Board of Education declares that the use of illegal drugs, the abuse of alcohol, and the misuse of prescription drugs are prohibited.*

The Knox County Board of Education is committed to a safe working environment, to making adequate provisions for the safety and health of its employees at their place of employment, and to the safety and health of students as well as the general public. The Board of Education believes that alcoholism and drug addiction are illnesses and should be treated as such. The Board further believes that employees who develop alcoholism or other drug addictions can be helped to recover and should be offered appropriate assistance. It is in the best interest of the employee and the Board of Education that when alcoholism or drug addiction is present, it should be diagnosed and treated at the earliest possible date. Confidential treatment of the diagnosis and recovery process for alcoholism or drug addiction is essential. See information on *Employee Assistance Program* for related information.

**Pre-Employment Testing.** In the furtherance of achieving the Knox County Board of Education's goal and objectives, all applicants being considered for employment positions identified as being safety-sensitive shall be required to submit to a urinalysis test for the detection of the illegal use of drug. All applicants shall be given a copy of this policy in advance of the post-offer, pre-employment physical.

**Reasonable Suspicion.** If a supervisor reasonably suspects and reports to the Chief Human Resources Officer or authorized designee and/or the Medical Review Officer that an employee's work performance or on-the-job behavior may have been affected in any way by illegal drugs or alcohol or that an employee has otherwise violated the Drug-Free Workplace Substance Abuse Policy, the employee may be required to submit a breath and/or urine sample for drug and alcohol testing. An employee who is required to submit to drug/alcohol testing based upon reasonable suspicion and refuses shall be charged with insubordination, and necessary procedures will be taken to terminate the employee. [Policy G-210](#).

## OUTSIDE/SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT

Employees shall be permitted to hold employment outside the school system so long as such activities do not (a) occur during the school day, or (b) interfere with regularly scheduled or appropriately assigned duties for the school system, or (c) reflect unfavorably on the school system. [Policy G-160](#).

## SMOKING AND TOBACCO USE

Smoking is not allowed in any form at any time inside any school building or anywhere on school property. Smoking is not permitted inside areas such as maintenance shops and garages.

This policy on smoking shall be communicated to all existing employees and to all prospective employees upon their application of employment. "No Smoking" signs shall be clearly and conspicuously posted on Knox County Schools campuses. Policy G-211.

## **EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIPS**

### **Nepotism**

No employee shall be under the immediate supervision of a member of the employee's immediate family, including a wife or husband, grandparent, child, grandchild, brother, sister, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, or sister-in-law. A principal and an immediate family member (first degree affinity or consanguinity) shall not be assigned to the same school. Relatives may be assigned to the same school where neither is a principal, upon the recommendation of the principal and the Director of Schools. Policy C-160.

### **Student-Staff Relationships**

Staff members shall use good judgment in their relationships with students beyond their work responsibilities and/or outside the school setting and shall avoid excessive informal and social involvement with individual students. Romantic, amorous or sexual relationships, and romantic, amorous or sexual comments or communications in any form between employees and students are strictly prohibited. This includes unprofessional and inappropriate communication.

Examples of unprofessional and inappropriate communications include, but are not limited to:

1. Employees fraternizing or communicating with students in a peer to peer or unduly familiar manner;
2. Writing personal letters, e-mailing, texting, contacting through social media, or calling student on their cell phones about subject matter that is beyond the scope of their professional relationship;
3. Sending suggestive, lewd or indecent pictures or images to students;
4. Discussing or revealing to students inappropriate aspects of private lives or inviting students to do the same; being overly familiar, and
5. Engaging in unnecessary and/or non-curricular dialogue concerning topics of a sexual nature

Employees must guard against associations with students that are outside the normal scope of employment and appropriate educator/student relationship. Employees engaging in such inappropriate conduct will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Any extenuating circumstances will be dealt with on an individual basis by the supervisor and/or superintendent. Employees who have reason to believe that another employee is inappropriately involved with a student, as described above, are obligated to report this information to their principal, supervisor or a human resources supervisor. Policy G-140.

## **VIOLATIONS OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

All employees are required to abide by Knox County Schools, policies, procedures and all applicable laws and regulations. Suspected violations of policy and procedures will be investigated. Failure to abide by applicable policies, laws, and regulations or engaging in actions which discredit the Knox County Schools may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **COMPENSATION**

### **AUTOMATIC PAYROLL DEPOSIT**

The KCS pays its employees via electronic disbursement. Forms are available in the Compensation Department or at [www.knoxschools.org](http://www.knoxschools.org). In addition, all paystubs are provided electronically through the [Employee Self Service \(ESS\) website](#). Password and ID information is provided at the employee orientation conducted by the KCS for all new employees.

### **BASE SALARY SCHEDULES**

Base salary schedules for all *Certified* and *Classified* employees are published at [www.knoxschools.org](http://www.knoxschools.org). Annual base salary will be determined by schedule, step, and supplement based on position, relevant education, and applicable experience.

### **STRATEGIC COMPENSATION**

Strategic compensation aligns district programs, classroom instruction and compensation systems with the goals of increasing educator effectiveness and maximizing student achievement. It incents certain actions or activities and rewards specific desired outcomes. Strategic compensation may entail pay, benefits, direct and indirect compensation, immediate and deferred compensation, and other monetary or non-monetary incentives.

[Policy G-270](#)

### **SIGNING BONUS**

A signing bonus of \$3,000 will be offered to new employees hired in identified *hard-to-staff* subject areas. Eligible employees must sign a contractual agreement adhering to the terms outlined below to receive the signing bonus. One of the key stipulations in that agreement is that the employee must commit to work for Knox County Schools for three years, unless KCS initiates employment termination. If the employee voluntarily leaves before fulfilling the three year commitment, he or she will be required to reimburse KCS on a pro-rated basis, i.e. one year remaining, reimburse 1/3; two years remaining, reimburse 2/3, etc.

Eligible *hard-to-staff* subject areas for the current school year are:

- Chemistry, Physics
- Special Education
- Speech and Language
- Mathematics (Geometry, Algebra II, Bridge, Finite, Calculus and Pre-Calculus)
- World Language Learners



- Other areas designated appropriate and approved by the Superintendent

Additional eligibility guidelines are as follows:

- Only employees hired in full time, regular, and full-time temporary positions are eligible. Employees hired on an interim contract are *not* eligible.
- Employee must be fully certified and endorsed in the subject area, and possess a valid Tennessee license. Employees on a waiver are *not* eligible.
- Employees who resign from the system and who choose to return are *not* eligible.
- Employees who have received the bonus incentive and who resign from the system and choose to return are *not* eligible.
- The bonus award is a gross amount and shall be subject to all applicable taxes, other normal payroll deduction, and any other deductions required by law.
- The bonus award is only offered one time.

The eligibility criteria are broad guidelines developed by the Human Resources Department. However, it is not possible to address every situation or circumstance under these guidelines. Therefore, the administration reserves the right to amend these guidelines in order to render decisions regarding this benefit on an as-needed basis. In the event that the number of employees eligible for the bonus exceeds the allocated amount, the final determination of which employees will receive the bonus will be based on hire date. KCS will make every effort to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and equitably. Please contact Human Resources for more details regarding the signing bonus.

## EMPLOYEE TYPES

**Certified.** Certified employees are any employee who holds a license issued by the Tennessee Department of Education or who credentialed to teach in the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps by a branch of the U.S. Armed Forces. Certified staff members require a valid professional license based on training that covers the subjects or grades taught and/or a specialty service area (e.g. guidance counselor) in accordance with rules and regulations of the State Board of Education. *Policy G-230.*

**Certified Time Card.** Certified timecards are used for any certificated personnel working in a part-time certified position. This includes retirees, tutors or retired teachers filling in for an employee absent for an extended period of time. Teachers providing instruction during their plan time for a hard to staff subject also report their time via timecard.

**Classified.** Classified staff members' employment status does not require certification in accordance with rules and regulations of the Tennessee Department of Education. Classified personnel may include the following employees: bookkeepers, secretaries, clerks, maintenance employees, custodial employees, cafeteria employees, instructional assistants, transportation employees and security guards, as well as many central office administrative services positions and Time Card (part-time). *Policy G-230.*

**Substitute.** Substitutes work as a replacement resulting from any short-term absence for food service, custodial, teaching, educational assistant, or secretary positions. Substitutes are not eligible for benefits or participation in the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System regardless of hours worked per week. However, substitutes can choose to participate in the *403B* or *457* retirement plan that is available through a third-party vendor (please contact Employee Benefits for more information). A substitute may only work up to 19 consecutive days for the same employee absence and are paid at the substitute daily rate. If the position requires more than 19 consecutive days, then it is categorized as a supply, interim, or temporary position as appropriate. *Policy G-470.*

**Supply.** These employees work between 15-89 consecutive days in the same teaching position and are paid at the supply daily rate. Supply teachers work in-service days, are not eligible for health, dental, life or vision benefits, must be on the substitute list, and must be certified and endorsed in the area taught. The supply teacher is treated like a regular teacher for absence reporting and payroll purposes. If the supply teacher is absent, it should be reported as a regular teaching absence and requires a substitute. Classified positions such as food service, custodial, teaching assistant, and secretary positions may also be designated as supply.

**Interim.** Interim employees work 90 or more days and hold a position for a teacher or employee who is on leave. For teaching and other certified positions, interim employees are paid based on degree and experience just like regular, certified staff. Interim employees must be applicants for regular teaching and certified positions, but they do not have to be on the substitute list. Interim teachers are treated like regular teachers for absence reporting and payroll purposes.

Interim employees may choose to accept or reject participation in the Tennessee Consolidated

Retirement System. However, if working at least 30 hours per week, interim employees are eligible for all other benefits.

Interim employees have no guarantee of a position beyond the time that the original employee is on leave or the end of the current school year. If the original employee resigns, the replacement changes from interim to temporary.

Classified positions such as food service, custodial, teaching assistant, and secretary positions may also be designated as interim.

**Temporary.** Temporary employees fill teaching positions and are paid based on degree and experience. Temporary teachers are treated like a regular teacher for absence reporting and payroll purposes. A temporary teacher is hired for a position for which no other person has a claim (resignation, retirement, new position). This position has no guarantee beyond the specified time or current school year. To obtain a position for a future year, the temporary teacher must submit a new application and be selected through the regular hiring process.

Typically, if a new position is created after classes start, the position is filled on a temporary basis. When an employee who is on leave of absence decides to resign, the person filling that position becomes a temporary employee at the time the original employee resigns. If working at least 30 hours per week, this employee is entitled to all eligible benefits.

Classified positions such as food service, custodial, teaching assistant, and secretary positions may also be designated as temporary.

## **WHICH EMPLOYEES ARE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR KNOWN VACANCIES?**

**The following will apply to employees regarding known vacancies:**

- ❖ Certified staff must have worked in the same school/position within the district for the **previous two years** to be eligible to apply for known vacancies and accept new positions.
- ❖ Employees who are temporary (due to late hire) or interim status are eligible to apply for known vacancies.
- ❖ Candidates who are on supply contracts or are substitutes are eligible to apply for known vacancies.
- ❖ Certified staff members are always eligible to apply for *promotional* opportunities.

## **PAYROLL**

Regular monthly payroll checks are deposited on the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month, or the last working day prior to the 25<sup>th</sup>. Maintenance and food service personnel are paid bi-weekly, every other Friday. Direct deposit changes must be received in the Compensation department by the close of business on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the month. Payroll deduction changes must be submitted to the appropriate department, Employee Benefits or Compensation. The change will be reflected the following month, provided all proper documentation is submitted with the change request. Written requests for payroll changes such as name and address must be received in the Human Resources office by the end of the workday on the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month.

## **PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS**

Mandatory deductions from gross pay include Social Security, Medicare, federal income tax withholding, retirement contribution, court-ordered garnishment, IRS levies, and fees assessed for criminal background check.

Employees who are absent without leave or take administrative leave without pay shall have their pay deducted by the amount of daily rate of pay for each day absent. This deduction shall occur at the time the information is processed; it cannot be spread over the remainder of the year. If the amount is greater than a month's wages, the deduction will occur monthly until the value of the overdrawn leave is recovered.

## **BENEFITS**

The school system offers a comprehensive benefits package to employees. New employees have 31 days from their hire date to select their benefits options. All eligible employees can make changes to existing or add new benefit plans during the annual Open Enrollment period held each fall. Below is brief information on benefits that are available to employees. For more details, please visit [www.knoxschools.org/benefits](http://www.knoxschools.org/benefits).

## **HEALTH INSURANCE**

KCS's Health Insurance Program is administered by Benefits Administration, a division of the department of Finance and Administration of State of Tennessee. Currently there are two carriers and several different plans. The carriers are Blue Cross/Blue Shield and CIGNA, with three different networks: BCBS network C, Cigna LocalPlus, and Cigna Open Access Pluc. There is a partnership plan, a standard plan, a limited plan and a consumer driven healthcare plan for each carrier and network. Employees may choose the program that best meets his/her needs.

There are six different rates: (1) employee only; (2) employee plus child or children; (3) employee plus spouse; (4) two employee coverage, (5) family coverage; or (6) two employee family coverage. A portion of the health insurance is paid by KCS. Employees on unpaid leave of absence are responsible for both the employee's portion and the Knox County School's portion of health care premiums. Employees eligible under Family and Medical Leave Act are eligible to continue paying only the employee premium for their FMLA period. Employees who retire may continue health insurance coverage if eligibility requirements are met. Employees whose health insurance is terminated for other reasons, or covered dependents of employees whose health insurance is terminated, may continue coverage for a limited period under COBRA.

The Employee [Benefits](#) office can provide details regarding coverage and premiums. Please visit their website for more information or by calling the Employee Benefits office.

## **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

If an employee participates in a health plan through the Knox County Schools, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is included in that plan. The program is administered by the State of Tennessee via Optum. The EAP provides confidential counseling and other services for such issues as: marital conflict; alcohol or drug dependency; family or parenting issues; stress management; self-improvement; and grief or loss counseling, etc. Please see <http://www.Here4TN.com> or call 855-437-3486 for additional information.

## **DENTAL INSURANCE**

Employees must work at least 120 hours a month to be eligible for dental insurance. Employees have the option of participating in a dental insurance plan. Premiums are paid one month in advance. Dental Insurance is available for eligible employees, their spouses and dependent children. The Dental Insurance plan provides benefits for Preventive, Basic, Major and Orthodontic procedures. Benefits are provided through Delta Dental for both in-network and out-of-network providers and procedures. There is no waiting period for coverage under the plan. Knox County Schools pays four dollars per month towards the premium. There are four different rates: (1) employee only; (2) employee plus one; (3) family; and (4) two employee family. There is an open enrollment period each year for coverage beginning date January 1 the following year.

Please call the Employee Benefits department for additional information or access them via the website, [www.knoxschools.org/benefits](http://www.knoxschools.org/benefits).

## **VISION INSURANCE**

Vision insurance is available for eligible employees working at least 120 hours per month, as well as, their spouses and dependent children. Benefits are provided through Eye Med. Benefits are available for both in-network and out-of-network providers and procedures. The employee pays 100% of the premiums. There are three different rates: (1) employee only; (2) employee plus one; and (3) family. There is an open enrollment each year for coverage beginning January 1 the following year.

## **BASIC GROUP TERM LIFE (GTL) INSURANCE**

Life insurance is provided free to all active, regular employees who work 18.5 hours or more per week. The coverage amount is 1.5 times the employee's annual salary. However, the minimum coverage amount is \$20,000 and the maximum coverage amount is \$50,000. KCS also offers an Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D) benefit coverage which pays only in the event of such.

Employees that separate from KCS may continue to carry term life coverage by converting to a whole life policy and paying 100% of the premium.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL GROUP TERM LIFE (GTL)**

Supplemental Life Insurance is available for eligible employees at group rates. Spousal and children's coverage is also available. Supplemental GTL Insurance is offered without health screening when an employee is hired if the paperwork is received within 31 days of the hire date. If it is refused at that time, and the employee later seeks to enroll, proof of insurability will be required. A maximum of \$150,000.00 of additional coverage is available for the employee. An employee can also sign up for \$30,000.00 of spouse coverage or \$5,000.00 of child coverage within 31 days of their hire date. Child coverage cannot begin until the child is over 14 days old and ends at age 26 unless the child is disabled.



## **FLEXIBLE BENEFITS – SECTION 125**

The Internal Revenue Service, under Section 125 of the IRS Code, authorizes flexible benefits. The tax code allows employees to pay for certain benefits with pre-tax dollars. There are three types of flexible benefits that the Knox County Schools offers: Premium Conversion, Medical Spending Accounts, health savings accounts, and Dependent Care.

### **PREMIUM CONVERSION**

Knox County employees who participate in the health, vision or dental insurance plans offered by the system are required to participate in premium conversion. Employees can also have some supplemental insurance premiums taken out pre-tax.

### **MEDICAL FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNT**

The Internal Revenue Service authorizes flexible spending accounts. These tax codes allow employees to pay for certain benefits with pre-tax dollars. A Medical Flexible Spending Account (MFSA) is available for eligible employees, spouses and dependent children. A MFSA is not insurance, but rather a way to pay for certain qualified, non-reimbursed medical expenses in a pre-tax salary reduction. The amount which can be placed in an MFSA each year may be limited by the Internal Revenue Service, but may not exceed the annual maximum established by the school system. \$500 dollars can be rolled from on year to the next. Any monies placed in an MFSA against which qualified expenditures cannot be filed above the \$500 dollar amount are forfeited according to Federal Law. The employee contributes 100% to the MFSA. Please call the Benefits & Employee Relations department or access them via the website [www.knoxschools.org/benefits](http://www.knoxschools.org/benefits), for additional information and forms.

### **HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNTS**

Employees that have selected the Health Savings CDHP qualify for a health savings account. KCS will make quarterly deposits into this account on behalf of the employee. These amounts will vary depending on the coverage level (Employee only, Employee plus Spouse, etc.) the employee has selected. Employees may also elect to defer pretax money into this account. The entire account balance will rollover from one year to the next with interest.

### **DEPENDENT CARE FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNT**

A Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account (DCFSA) is available for eligible employees, spouses and dependent children. A DCFSA is not insurance, but rather a way to pay for certain qualified dependent care expenses in a pre-tax salary reduction. The amount which can be placed in a DCFSA each year may be limited by the Internal Revenue Service, but may not exceed the annual maximum established by the school system. Any monies placed in a DCFSA against which qualified expenditures cannot be filed are forfeited according to Federal Law. A DCFSA cannot be used if claiming a Dependent Child Credit on a Federal Income Tax return for that year (please consult a tax professional for specific details). The employee contributes 100% to the DCFSA.

## TAX DEFERRED INVESTMENTS

Current IRS regulations allow employees to participate in tax deferred investments under Sections 403(b) and 457(b) of the Internal Revenue Code (commonly known as 403(b)/457 plans), if the employee qualifies. TCRS members may also contribute to the State's 401(k) plan through Empower. All employees of Knox County Schools, whether regular or temporary (full-time or part-time, regardless of work schedule), are eligible to participate providing that contributions are made from the employee's wages and they have not applied for a hardship withdrawal during the period set out by the IRS. Please call the Benefits & Employee Relations department or access them via the website, [www.knoxschools.org/benefits](http://www.knoxschools.org/benefits), for additional information.

## TUITION ASSISTANCE

KCS supports employees who wish to take coursework that is relevant to the employee seeking certification and/or additional endorsement in an approved critical needs subject area. In keeping with this philosophy, KCS has established a tuition assistance program for expenses incurred through approved institutions of learning. Full-time regular employees, certified or non-certified, employed with Knox County Schools three years or more, will be eligible for participation in the tuition program as long as the courses lead to certification or endorsement in an approved critical needs subject area as determined by the Executive Director of Human Resources.

To receive this benefit, employees must be employed by KCS, at the beginning of the course, the end of the course, and at the time of reimbursement. KCS will reimburse up to a maximum of \$1,200 per course or \$2,400 per academic school year for tuition expenses incurred by an employee for continuing education through an accredited program. The employee must secure a minimum passing grade of a "B" or its equivalent to receive a reimbursement. Expenses must be validated by receipts and a copy of the final grade or transcript.

Employees receiving the benefit and obtaining additional certification(s) or endorsement(s) are required to teach a minimum of three years in the subject area for which the employee received the tuition assistance. Should the employee resign or otherwise voluntarily leave employment with KCS prior to completion of his/her program of coursework, the tuition assistance benefit ends and all tuition assistance funds accepted by the employee up to that point must be repaid. If the employee resigns or otherwise voluntarily leaves employment with the KCS within three years or less from the date of completion of his or her coursework and his or her receipt of additional certification or endorsement, repayment of all tuition assistance shall be required of the employee. However, if the Board of Education is unable to offer the employee a position in the area of the newly obtained licensure, the employee shall not be required to repay the tuition assistance funds.

If funds are not sufficient for all requests, a determination for tuition assistance will be based on the school system's critical needs. The Executive Director of Human Resources reserves the right to make decisions regarding this benefit on a case by case basis and will make every effort to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and equitably. Please contact the Human Resources Department for more information regarding the Tuition Assistance Program. *Policy G-320; Form HR146AB*

## RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS / PENSION

All regular *Classified* employees who work 18.5 hours per week belong to the Knox County Retirement and Pension System. The retirement plan is a 401(a) Asset Accumulation Plan. This plan is a defined contribution plan, not a defined benefit plan. There is a mandatory 6% pre-tax contribution. This contribution is matched dollar-for-dollar or a full 100% match. Employees are vested in those matching contributions at a rate of 20% each year of service. As such, employees are vested 100% after five years. Employees are always 100% vested in the employee contributions. All employees who were hired after 1991 are in the Asset Accumulation Plan. Prior to a 1991 hire date, *classified* employees could be members of a closed defined benefit plan. For detailed information, visit the Knox County Retirement and Pension Office web site at <http://www.knoxcounty.org/retirement/> .

*Certified* employees who are in a regular or temporary, full-time positions are enrolled in one of two mandatory plans sponsored by the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS) of the State of Tennessee. Employees who are part-time or in an interim position can choose to participate in the TCRS retirement plan.

The two retirement plans provided by TCRS are the Legacy and the Hybrid plans. The Legacy plan is reserved for teachers that have had a least 1 year of service with a TCRS organization as a teacher prior to July 1<sup>st</sup> 2014. The plan requires a mandatory 5% pre-tax contribution. The Defined Benefit plan guarantees a monthly benefit which is based on a member's five highest years of consecutive earnings and service. The benefit is payable for the life of the member and when applicable, transferable to a member's spouse or beneficiary(ies).

A Defined Benefit retirement plan relieves members of the burden of making investment decisions and assuming the risk associated with those decisions. Unlike an IRA or 401K account, a TCRS retirement benefit is not impacted by stock market performance. The State of Tennessee guarantees TCRS members will receive retirement income for life.

The Hybrid plan is reserved for the teachers hired after July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 that do not have at least a year of prior service with a TCRS organization as a teacher. The Hybrid Plan provides a combination of a defined benefit plan and a defined contribution plan. The defined benefit portion of the Hybrid Plan will be managed by TCRS. The defined contribution assets will be deposited into the state's 401(k) plan where teachers will manage the investments with the 401(k) plan. This plan requires a 5% contribution of salary to the defined benefit portion of the Hybrid Plan.

Also, with both plans, a TCRS retirement benefit can be passed to a beneficiary at a member's death, and the beneficiary continues to receive this income until his or her death depending on the benefit option a retiree chooses. For detailed information, visit the TCRS web site at <http://treasury.tn.gov/tcrs/>.

## **EMPLOYEE WELFARE**

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

From time to time it is necessary to delay or cancel classes across the school system due to poor road or school access conditions that have been caused by inclement weather such as rain or snow.

The Superintendent of Schools is the only person who may make the decision to close school for any reason. The intent is to make the decision as early as possible to allow parents time to make appropriate arrangements. In the event that the decision to cancel school or delay school must be made in the early morning hours, this decision should be made prior to 5:00 a.m. if at all possible. As soon as the decision to close schools is made, the Superintendent will use all means available to inform the public including news media, internet, e-mail, text and mass telephone notification. When all schools in the system are closed, the Superintendent will determine whether the Central Office and other support offices staff shall report to work.

When school is released early due to weather, the Central Office and all school offices will remain open and operational until it is reasonably confirmed that all students have safely reached their homes or have been picked up by their parents or guardian. If school is not in session or is dismissed early due to inclement weather, all scheduled activities in which students are involved will generally be postponed or cancelled. Principals will ensure that school phones and 800 MHz radios are manned. No school will cease operation or make a decision to close until the principal reports to the Superintendent's Office and receives permission to do so from the Superintendent, or until a system-wide decision has been made and communicated.

Policy A-141

### **EMERGENCY / CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

At each school, the principal shall develop a Crisis Management Plan in conjunction with the system-wide *Knox County Schools Emergency Handbook* for use in times of such things as, but not limited to, suicides, shootings, and death of a student, parent or faculty member. Principals must send a copy of the emergency plan for the school to the Security Office each year, as required by the SAVE Act (Schools Against Violence in Education) enacted by the state of Tennessee in 2007. The principal shall appoint a Crisis Team which shall deal with specific situations, make decisions, and disseminate information in the event of a crisis.

The principal of each building shall be responsible for the adherence to the *Knox County Schools Emergency Handbook* provided by the Security department. Training for all school employees in the crisis management procedures shall be conducted annually during in-service sessions prior or during the school year.

In the event of a crisis, the principal shall notify the Crisis Team member, the Superintendent, and any necessary emergency services (police, fire, ambulance, etc.). Policy E-123.

## **SAFETY**

All staff members shall report current and potential hazards to their immediate supervisors. At each school, the principal shall develop procedures for keeping school facilities safe and free from hazards. Each site's safety program will include: Fire prevention; Accident prevention; Warning signals; Emergency drills such as, but not limited to, fire, severe weather, earthquake, bomb threat and intruders; Emergency closings; Traffic safety; Traffic and parking controls; Safety inspections; First aid; Disaster preparedness plan for major emergencies.

Only persons with lawful and valid business on the school/site premises shall enter onto the grounds or into the buildings. All staff members shall report all persons appearing to be improperly on school premises. School security and/or law enforcement officials should be engaged, if necessary, to maintain order or security. Policy E-120.

## **WORKERS' COMPENSATION**

*All employees* are eligible to receive Workers' Compensation benefits.

All accidents/injuries, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, must be reported to an employee's direct supervisor immediately and to the Employee Benefits Office. Sick leave benefits shall be paid to employees only when workers' compensation benefits are not available or may be used in lieu of Temporary Total Disability payments.

The KCS Board has established a medical panel consisting of general practitioners to treat on-the-job injuries. Employees may choose from any of the general practitioners listed on the medical panel for treatment of on-the-job injuries. Each school and building should have a posting of approved providers.

If an employee needs medical treatment at any time when the doctors' offices on the Workers' Compensation Panel are closed, or if the Employee Benefits Office is closed, he or she may go to any Knox County hospital. The employee must notify their supervisor as soon as possible on the next working day. Policy E-201.

*Certified* teachers have benefits comparable to workers' compensation for up to 1 year if they are injured by a physical assault or other violent crime committed against the teacher in the course of the teacher's employment activities.

## **SICK LEAVE BANK**

KCS maintains separate Sick Leave Banks for *Certified* and *Classified* employees. Both the *Certified* and *Classified* Sick Leave Bank provide additional sick leave days to contributors who have suffered a major personal illness, injury, disability or quarantine and whose personal leave, sick leave and vacation leave has been exhausted. Regular employees who are entitled to sick leave are eligible to participate. To join the Sick Leave Bank, an employee must deposit three (3) sick leave days during the open enrollment period; then agree to assessments of 1-3 days at designated times, as determined by the Sick Leave Bank Trustee Board. Participation is voluntary, and employees must request and complete appropriate forms to join and/or access the Sick Leave Bank.

*Classified*, employees can apply to utilize days from the Sick Leave Bank after a minimum of 30 days of membership. Sick bank days cannot be granted during the first year of enrollment for any illness diagnosed or in existence within the previous twelve (12) months. There is a 15 consecutive day waiting period after the diagnosis before the sick leave bank can be used. The maximum number of days in a calendar year *Classified* employees can use the Sick Leave bank is 60 days. However, there is a maximum of 90 days total that can be used for one illness or occurrence.

*Certified* employee Sick Leave Bank rules and regulations are detailed in State law TCA §49-5-801 - 810. The maximum number of days in a calendar year *Certified* employees can use the Sick Leave bank is 60 days. However, there is a maximum of 90 days total that can be used for one illness or occurrence.

Please contact the Employee Benefits Office at 865-594-1686 for more detailed information on the *Classified* Sick Leave Bank and the *Certified* Sick Leave Bank.



## **TIME AWAY FROM WORK**

### **COURT APPEARANCES**

If an employee appears in court because of a personal interest, whether as a plaintiff, defendant or witness or voluntarily appears in behalf of family or friends, or if an employee is required to appear in court either as a defendant or plaintiff in a civil case, personal leave or leave without pay will be granted in accordance with the established board policies on leaves. Policy G-460; G-590

### **FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE**

The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) entitles employees to take reasonable leave for medical concerns, for the birth or adoption of a child, and for the care of a child, spouse, or parent who has a serious health condition. Anyone who has been employed for at least 12 months by the Board of Education and has worked at least 1,250 hours during the previous twelve-month period is eligible for FMLA. The school system will continue to make the board's contribution to the employee's health, dental and life insurance during FMLA leave. The employee is also guaranteed the same or similar employment when he or she returns to work at the end of the FMLA leave. Policy G-464; Policy G-463; G-590.

### **CHILD CARE AND MATERNITY LEAVE**

Any employee may take a child care leave. The child must be under or the age of two and proof of age may be required.

The request must be in writing at least 30 days prior to the leave and specify the dates departure and return, to the extent which these dates are known. The supervisor must submit the proper form and request to the Human Resources Department. Sick leave may be used during physical disability only as determined by the physician. Otherwise, child care leave shall be unpaid leave.

For adoption purposes, sick leave may be used for a period of up to thirty (30) days. A copy of supporting documentation from the adoption agency must be provided. In the event that both adoptive parents are employees of KCS, only one employee may use this time.

Leave and leave extensions shall not exceed a total of two consecutive years. Policy G-464; Policy G-463; G-590.

### **VACATION AND HOLIDAY LEAVE**

Full-time employees on twelve month assignments earn vacation days at the rate of one per month plus one day per year worked for Knox County up to a total of 8 days for years of service within Knox County for a possible total of 20 days. No more than 20 vacation days can be carried over from year to year. Accumulated days plus days to be earned for the year will be advanced and credited to the employees on July 1 of each year. The Superintendent (or his designee) and immediate supervisor must approve the time of vacation.

Employees working a ten month assignment will earn 10 vacation days at the rate of one for

every 19 days worked. These days are built into the annual calendar for the employee.

Employees have holiday leave as defined in Board of Education policy. Policy G-462, G-591.

## **MILITARY LEAVE**

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. Employees who are reservists and 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. Employees should give such notice to their immediate supervisor.

While performing such duty or training, the employee shall be paid his 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 regular salary for such time as he is engaged in the performance of his duty, and any time spent in active state duty shall not count against the period of leave allowed for military service.

Request for leaves and extension of leaves shall conform to state law and the Board of Education policy governing all leaves of absence. Failure to comply with applicable laws and policies shall constitute grounds for dismissal.

The employee must supply a copy of the orders for duty, including the dates of departure and return it to the Director of Schools prior to, or simultaneous with, requesting leave. Policy G-465; Policy G-463; G-590.

## **JURY DUTY**

Employees called for jury duty shall:

- Complete via Aesop a Jury Duty Request.
- Submit Summons to appear in court to the building level administrator.

KCS pays regular employee wages for the days served on jury duty. However, it is required that employees refund any payment for jury duty received from the Knox County courts less any expenses incurred such as parking, lunch, etc. Please see supervisor for more details regarding the submission of these funds.

*If you report to court and do not serve on a jury that day — report to work. If you report to court and only spend a portion of the day there — go to work for the remainder of your workday. In other words, an employee must be serving jury duty or be at work during normal working hours.*

Teachers summoned for jury duty shall appear in court and specify a seven (7) day period within twelve months that he/she will be available for jury duty. Teachers are entitled to the usual compensation, less the amount paid by the court. Policy G-460; Policy G-463; G-591; G-590.

## **PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LEAVE**

Employees shall earn personal leave at the rate of one day for each half year employed for a total of two (2) days per year. An employee must give his/her supervisor one day written notice for leave to be approved except in the case of an emergency.

Personal leave is earned at the rate of ½ day per 50 paid contract days for a maximum of 2 days per school year. Unused personal leave converts to sick leave at the end of each school year.

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. Any personal leave remaining unused at the end of a year shall be credited to sick leave. Policy G-462, Policy G-463; G-590.

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 for professional leave shall be submitted to the immediate supervisor at least ten (10) working days prior to requested leave of absence.

## **SICK LEAVE**

Employees earn 1 day for each 19 paid contract days. The 13 days applies to all 255 or 260 day personnel.

200 day contracts maximum earned 10 days per school year  
211 day contracts maximum earned 10.5 days per school year  
221 day contracts maximum earned 11 days per school year  
255 day/260 day contracts maximum earned 13 days per school year

Sick leave shall be granted for: employee illness from natural causes or accident; quarantine; or illness or death of a member of the immediate family of an 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 certificate from the physician on designated form may be required in support of any claim for sick leave pay. An employee absent for five (5) consecutive working days shall submit a doctor's statement verifying illness or injury of the employee or immediate family member. However, frequent use and/or suspected misuse of sick leave by an employee are sufficient

grounds for requiring a physician's certificate stating the reason for absence. A falsified statement shall be grounds for dismissal.

A teacher, upon employment with KCS, may transfer accumulated sick leave from another Tennessee public school system, provided the system in which the accumulated leave was held provides notarized verification. Policy G-461, Policy G-463; G-590.

## **BEREAVEMENT LEAVE**

Bereavement leave shall be granted for the death of a member of the immediate family of a professional employee, including the teacher'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.

Per occurrence, up to two days of paid bereavement leave shall be granted to professional employees. The days do not accrue and may not exceed ten (10) days per school year. If additional days are needed in relation to the death of an immediate family member, up to three days of other leave (sick, personal, or unpaid) may be used. In extraordinary circumstances, additional sick, personal, or unpaid days due to bereavement may be requested through the Director of Schools. Professional employees may be required to provide appropriate documentation. Permanent, cumulative bereavement records for each active employee shall be kept in the Human Resources Office.

## **LEAVE WITHOUT PAY**

Employees may request to take up to 3 days leave without pay. This request must be approved by the immediate supervisor and then sent to the Superintendent for ultimate approval. It should be sent in at least 30 days prior to the first requested day of leave. Employees and immediate supervisors will be informed of the final decision by the appropriate Human Resources Supervisor.

## **JOB ABANDONMENT**

Employees who do not show up for work, do not contact their supervisor about taking leave and do not file the appropriate leave forms and/or put their absences into Aesop will be considered to have abandoned their job. This abandonment, which would consist of 5 days or longer, will be treated as a resignation and benefits will end in the same manner as if the person had turned in a resignation letter.

## **LONG-TERM LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

Employees in regular, temporary, or interim positions shall be granted leave without pay for military service, legislative service, maternity, adoption, recuperation of health or visitation of a spouse, child or parent deployed for military duty out of the country who has been granted rest and recuperation leave or other sufficient reason without loss of accumulated leave credits, tenure status, or other fringe benefits. Leave to visit a spouse, child or parent deployed for military duty out of the country, who has been granted rest and recuperation leave, shall be granted for no longer than ten (10) days. Certified employees may also request leaves for educational improvement purposes.

All leaves shall be requested in writing at least thirty (30) days in advance on forms provided by the Superintendent. The 30-day notice may be waived or reduced by the Superintendent upon submission of a certified statement by a physician. The application for leave forms shall require: a description of the type of leave requested; the requested dates for beginning and ending the leave; and a statement of intent to return to the position from which leave is granted.

The Superintendent will respond to all leave requests in writing. All leaves, except military leave, shall specify a beginning and end date. However, any leave may be extended by the Superintendent upon written request from the employee. The maximum period for a leave of absence is two continuous years, this includes any FMLA time.

Positions vacated for less than twelve (12) months by employees on leave shall be filled with an interim employee while the employee is on leave. If the employee returns from leave within 12 months, the interim employee shall relinquish the position. If the leave exceeds twelve (12) months, the employee shall be placed in the same or a comparable position upon return. Any employee on leave shall notify the Superintendent at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of return if the employee does not intend to return to the position from which he is on leave.

*Policy G-464, Policy G-463; G-590.*

## TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

### DISMISSAL AND NON-RENEWAL

**Classified Employees.** All classified employees, including teaching assistants, are at-will employees with no annual employment agreement. Employees terminated for any reason shall be paid all earnings authorized or due at the end of the next regular pay period.

Policy G-520.

**Non-Tenured Teachers.** The Superintendent may dismiss any non-tenured teacher at any time when deemed necessary for incompetence, inefficiency, insubordination, improper conduct or neglect of duty, after giving the non-tenured teacher, in writing, due notice of the charges. The Superintendent is also authorized to dismiss a teacher convicted of a felony. The non-tenured teacher will be given the opportunity to pursue a full and complete hearing before an impartial hearing officer to dispute the reasons for dismissal. In addition, the non-tenured teacher may have the opportunity to appeal any decision in favor of KCS resulting from a hearing. Please see full policy related to dismissal of non-tenured teachers. Policy G-381.

**Non-Renewal of Employment Agreement.** The Superintendent is under no obligation to re-employ non-tenured teachers or other non-tenured *Certified* personnel at the end of their employment period. If the Superintendent determines not to renew the employment agreement of a non-tenured teacher, the following action shall be taken:

1. The Board shall be notified at the next regular Board of Education meeting; and
2. Written notice of non-renewal shall be hand delivered or sent to the employee by U.S. registered mail so that it will be received by the employee within 5 days following the last instructional day for the school year.

The principal is responsible for discussing deficiencies with the non-tenured teacher and providing assistance for overcoming these deficiencies. Any *Classified* contract employee should have no expectation of renewal. Classified employees will be given at least 15 days' notice if not recommended for continued employment. Non-renewal is not considered a dismissal/suspension; as such, those procedures do not apply. Policy G-381, G-331; Procedure G-331.

**Tenured Teachers / Certified Personnel.** When charges are made to the Board of Education against tenured personnel charging offenses which justify dismissal, the charges shall be made in writing, specifically stating the offenses which are charged, and shall be signed by the party or parties making the charges. If, in the opinion of the Board, charges are of such nature as to warrant the dismissal, the Superintendent shall give the teacher a written notice of the decision, together with a copy of a form which shall be provided by the Commissioner of Education advising as to the teacher's legal duties, rights and recourse under the terms of this part.

Any teacher convicted of a felony or convicted of a specific offense, as defined by state law, shall be immediately suspended and dismissed subject to the provision. If the dismissal of the teacher is upheld by the Board of Education and court reviews, the Superintendent will notify in writing the revocation proceedings under applicable rules of the Tennessee Board of Education.



For details regarding appeals and related procedures for dismissal of tenured personnel, please see full policy. [Policy G-330, G-380.](#)

## RESIGNATIONS

**Classified Employees.** Classified personnel shall give the immediate supervisor written notice of resignation at least two (2) weeks (ten (10) working days) in advance of the effective date of voluntary termination. The ten (10) working days may be waived by the Superintendent or designee for justifiable reason. The immediate supervisor shall forward copies of written notice the day received to the Human Resources Department. The payroll office will prepare final payment for the next appropriate scheduled pay day. [Policy G-550.](#)

**Teachers / Certified Employees.** A teacher shall give the Superintendent notice of resignation at least thirty (30) days before the effective date of the resignation. A teacher, who fails to give such notice, in the absence of justifiable extenuating circumstances, shall forfeit all tenure status. The Board of Education may waive the thirty (30) days' notice requirement and permit a teacher to resign in good standing.

The conditions under which it is permissible to break an employment agreement with the Board are as follows:

1. The incapacity on the part of the teacher to perform the employment agreement as evidenced by the certified statement of a physician approved by the Board of Education;
2. The release by the Board of the teacher from the employment agreement which the teacher has entered into with the Board.

Any teacher on leave shall notify the Superintendent in writing at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of return if the teacher does not intend to return to the position from which he has taken leave. Failure to render such notice may be considered a breach of employment agreement. Upon a breach of employment agreement, the Board of Education may file a complaint with the Commissioner and request the suspension of a teacher's certificate for no less than 30 and up to 365 days. Please see policy for full details on appeal process and procedures related to this action. [Policy G-400.](#)

## RETIREMENT

**Classified Employees.** Retirement shall mean a termination of services under conditions which will allow the employee to draw benefits from the Knox County Retirement and Pension Office. Employees must meet and/or complete paperwork with the Knox County Retirement and Pension Office in order to receive retirement benefits. Benefits personnel shall assist employees with the continuation of benefits of life, health, dental and vision insurance by meeting with them and helping them complete all of their paperwork. Classified employees must wait 90 calendar days from the date of their last paycheck and approval of the Knox County Retirement and Pension Board before they can apply to work as a retiree. Retired Classified employees drawing a monthly check are limited to 720 hours of work within the district in a calendar year.

**Teachers / Certified Employees.** Retirement shall mean a termination of services under conditions which will allow the employee to draw benefits from the TCRS. Employees eligible for

retirement benefits may elect to retire at any age with 30 years of service or at age 60 with at least 5 years of service without a penalty according to the provisions of TCRS. Employee Benefits personnel shall assist employees in securing retirement benefits by meeting with them and completing all of their paperwork.

Retired certified employees must wait 60 days from their last day of work before they can return to work. During a twelve-month period, retired teachers may not work more than one-hundred and twenty (120) days or the equivalent; i.e. 900 hours for employees based on a 7.5 hour work day or 930 hours based on a 7.75 hour work day. However, if the Superintendent certifies in writing to the Board of Education that no other qualified personnel are available to substitute teach, the retired member may work a total of 210 days during the twelve-month period if employed as a substitute teacher. Policy G-410.

## **Guidelines for Rehiring**

### **Guidance on rehiring teachers who are non-renewed for low performance:**

Teachers who are non-renewed and did not meet expectations (level 3) on their most recent performance evaluation will not be considered for continued employment by Knox County Schools. After successful employment in another school district where the teacher has received an effectiveness score of 3 (meets expectation) or better, he/she may reapply for employment with the Knox County School system. See KCS Procedure G-331 (Non-Tenure).

Unique circumstances may be appealed to the Director of Schools for consideration.

## **EMPLOYEE FORMS**

The electronic version of frequently used forms are available on the website. Please go to <http://www.knoxschools.org/forms> or [www.knoxschools.org/benefits](http://www.knoxschools.org/benefits) for complete list of documents.